

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

Official Organ of the Executive Committee of the Communist International



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The Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the Ninth Anniversary

THE XV All-Union Party Conference has concluded its work. A number of problems which confronted the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, problems which have troubled all Sections of the Communist International throughout the whole of the past year, have been subjected to thorough discussion and settled by the collective mind of the Leninist Party.

On the one hand the Conference showed the tremendous capacity of the Soviet Communist Party to approach the immediate problems of Socialist Construction practically and in a business-like manner; the Conference devoted several sessions to discussing problems of the economic situation of the country, summing up the results of the "restoration" period now ending, and indicating the practical measures that will be adopted to carry out the general policy of industrialising the country which the Party drew up at the XIV Congress.

The Conference also devoted several sessions to discussing the results of the work and of the immediate tasks of the Soviet trade unions, which now embrace more than nine million workers. The economic growth of the country and above all the development of heavy industry; the influx of new strata of workers into production; the difficulties of economic growth with petty-peasant agriculture prevailing, together with hostile capitalist encirclement, difficulties which have been and are being successfully overcome by the proletariat of the U.S.S.R.—all these things complicate the tasks of the trade unions, confront them with new practical problems which must be solved on the basis of the tested and confirmed experience of the Leninist teaching on the mutual relations of the Party, trade unions and the proletarian State.

Both on the question of the economic situation and the question of the task of the trade unions the practical business-like detailed discussions showed the will of the Party to build up a Socialist society, showed that the Party has grown up in its everyday work, showed that the Party was capable of taking sober and calm account of all the difficulties confronting it, not quivering before them, but overcoming them.

On the other hand, as if to demonstrate their in-

ability to solve together with the Party the tremendous tasks of construction, the opposition leaders, by not adhering to the Party policy, by declaring their positions to be unchanged, were not only unable to oppose the Central Committee's theses with their own proposals, but did not even speak on questions of practical, economic and trade union work. Thereby they seemed to admit their own bankruptcy, their own incapacity for a real business-like struggle for the building up of Socialism.

THE Party did not confine itself to the discussion of problems of current work. The Party combined elucidation of the practical problems of how to carry out Leninist policy with an analysis of problems of the world proletarian struggle. This could not be otherwise, for in accordance with real Leninist internationalism, the Party considers the victorious revolution as "the basis for the further development of the world revolutionary movement," considers "the will of the Soviet proletariat to continue building up Socialism" to be one of the most important factors "in the development of the world revolution"* and does not for one moment separate its work of building "a complete Socialist society" from the work of the revolutionary proletariat of other countries towards the complete and fundamental destruction of capitalist society.

At the same time the Conference combined practical business-like work with a profound theoretical examination of one of the main problems of Leninism—the problem of the character and future of our revolution. Like one man the Conference rose up in defence of the Leninist ideas against the "revolutionist" sallies of the Opposition alliance, and after thorough discussion, after three hour-and-half speeches by Kamenev, Trotsky and Zinoviev, unanimously passed the resolution on the Social Democratic deviation of the Opposition.

In the Opposition alliance are united (under the leadership in theory and ideas of Trotskyism) all the

* From the resolution of the Conference on the Opposition Alliance.

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vacillating elements of the Party, from the semi-Syndicalist semi-Menshevik fragments of the so-called "Workers' Opposition" to the new opposition headed by Kamenev and Zinoviev, *i.e.*, the "pair of comrades who lost their principles" (Lenin), who nine years ago in face of the Insurrection began to hide behind arguments which were "such an astonishing display of panic, fright, and bankruptcy on all the basic ideas of Bolshevism and revolutionary-proletarian internationalism, that it is difficult to seek an explanation for such shameful vacillations." (Lenin, Vol. XIV, Russian Ed., part II, page 272).

The Opposition consists of those elements whose deviations of the N.E.P. years have been rejected by the Party and who have not succeeded in understanding their errors, have not succeeded in returning to the Party's standpoint and have become congealed in their own petty-bourgeois Opposition to the Leninist leadership of the Party, and therefore to the proletarian leadership of the country. Therefore the victory of the Party over the Opposition bloc, the unanimous condemnation of the Opposition platform by the Party Conference as a "Social Democratic deviation" sums up the whole of this historic struggle of Leninism against anti-Leninist vacillations, which comprises one of the most important chapters of the internal Party history in the "restoration" period of our economics.

IT is no mere chance that the Party victory over unprincipled petty-bourgeois deviation coincides with the end of the ninth year of proletarian dictatorship and of the first five economic years which have proceeded entirely along the lines of the New Economic Policy. Under the leadership of the Party the country has done more than merely complete the restoration of the pre-war forces of production in the new transitional social-economic form. On the ninth anniversary of October one can say that under the leadership of the Party the country is successfully making the first step along the path of technical reconstruction of national economy, the path of creating "the foundations of Socialist economy." Does not the fact that it is possible to invest more than one milliard roubles (as against 800,000 during the preceding year) on capital expenditure for industry and electrification go to show that the proletarian State has learnt the mechanics of accumulation, and made a first successful step forward towards industrialisation? Does not the victory over economic difficulties, which has already become quite clearly manifest, go to show that we are successfully passing on (or have even already passed on) into a new and higher phase of economic growth, that the historic gulf between the "restoration" and the "building up" period will in the main be successfully bridged by us during the forthcoming period? And do not the unjustified April forecasts of gloom made by the Opposition and even their despair at the "reproduction of the present difficulties on a growing scale" (Trotsky) and the fact that the "economic period we are now entering may in the event of a good harvest (!) together with a general growth in economy even accentuate the difficulties pointed out" (Kamenev)—do not these words now sound disgraceful?

The Opposition at the Conference protested against the Party calling its ideas the ideas of surrender and

its deviation a Social-Democratic deviation. But has not defeatism crept into the phrases we have quoted, has not the lack of faith in the forces of proletarian construction appeared as nothing more or less than panic in face of "a good harvest"? The Party is right when it says that "certain sections of our Party—it is true small in numbers—have been frightened by the difficulties, are displaying tiredness and vacillation, falling into despair and cultivating depressed moods, becoming infected with mistrust in the creative forces of the proletariat and arriving at the ideology of defeatism."

And has it not been proved that the Opposition, on such a central problem of Leninism as that of the nature and future of our revolution, has put forward a formula which almost literally coincides with the arguments of the theoretician of world Menshevism, Otto Bauer? Trotsky wrote that the Russian proletariat having taken power "comes into hostile collision not only with all groupings of the bourgeoisie which supported it during the first period of the revolutionary struggle, but also with the wide masses of the peasantry with the support of which it came into power"; Otto Bauer asserted that "in Russia, where the proletariat comprises only an insignificant minority of the nation, it can only consolidate its power temporarily . . . it must inevitably lose it once more, as soon as the peasant mass of the nation becomes sufficiently mature in culture to take power into its own hands."

According to Trotsky, "the contradictions in the situation of a workers' government in a backward country with an overwhelming majority of peasants can only find their solution on an international scale, on the arena of the world revolution"; according to Bauer the "temporary rule of industrial Socialism in agrarian Russia is only a torch which summons the proletariat in the industrial West to the struggle," and "only by the conquest of political power by the proletariat of the industrial West will it be possible to ensure a long rule of industrial Socialism" in Russia.

Surely it cannot enter anyone's head that such a coincidence of the most important thoughts of the leader of the Opposition alliance, comrade Trotsky, and the leader of Social Democracy, Otto Bauer, is "a chance one"? Surely it is clear to everyone that such a coincidence clearly reveals the Social Democratic nature of Opposition "Leftism"?

AFTER that there is no need to be surprised that the Opposition proved to be the centre of attraction for all anti-Party, anti-Communist, opportunist tendencies. Is it not a fact that the renegade Levi stated that "our position is the position of the Opposition"? Is it not a fact that the Russian Mensheviks have stated that the Opposition is approaching their arguments? Is it not a fact that "ultra-Left gentlemen" such as Korsch or Schwarz have encouraged and welcomed the Opposition as its Russian ally? Finally, is it not a fact that even the Cadets have found the Opposition criticism useful for undermining the proletarian Dictatorship?

At the Conferences the Opposition tried to protest against the charge of Social Democratic deviations. But if it succeeded in proving anything at all by its statements it was just the opposite of what it wanted. For at the Conference it did not renounce one of its statements; Comrade Trotsky defended all his assertions, in-

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cluding those which we have just compared with Bauer. At the Conference the Opposition did not withdraw a single one of the unprecedented charges which had one by one "been let loose" by its representatives during the last few months, and which entirely correspond with what international Menshevism writes and says about the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet regime.

At the Conference Kamenev, despite the fact of the successful process of grain provisions, despite the growth of the relative proportion of the Socialist elements in all economic fields, despite the undoubted issue of the U.S.S.R. from last year's economic difficulties—in a word "arguing in defiance of the elements"—asserted that the process of private capitalist accumulation "had taken place at such a rate that it had proved able to hold up the development of our State sector."

Will it not be correct to qualify this fantastic statement as a pot-pourri of the old panic and capitulatory songs? Further, do not the following words of comrade Kamenev reveal the entire "depth" of the Opposition's non-comprehension of the paths of Socialist accumulation in the U.S.S.R.: "Where shall we get the material resources internally necessary for industrialisation if the worker receives low wages, if the 'unfortunate' 'little kulak,' who is developing weakly, who is to be pitied, promises still to 'grow' quietly 'into Socialism,' and on the other hand the NEPman receives four roubles a head—where shall we get the money from?" Why, the direct sense of these words amounts to the Opposition seeing in the kulaks and Nepmen the main source of means for industrialisation and that it considers that the weakness of these strata is an obstacle to industrialisation.

From this conception a direct conclusion can be drawn as to the desirability of the growth of the economic power of the "kulaks" and Nepmen, these main supports of Kamenevian industrialisation. Finally, does not the newly repeated statement of Trotsky, that the "internal contradictions arising from backwardness should find a

solution in an international revolution" confirm the qualification of Opposition ideology as a Social Democratic deviation?

This statement again precludes to the proletariat of the U.S.S.R., the possibility of building up Socialism with its own forces, overcoming the contradictions with the peasantry, and of not marking time in one place and not "degenerating" into passive expectation "of the State support of the Western European proletariat" (Trotsky). Has not comrade Trotsky stretched out his hand to the Social Democratic theoreticians of "ultra-imperialism" in stating—in direct contradiction to Lenin—that "imperialism develops more 'equalising' tendencies (amongst countries) than pre-finance capital"? Did not Trotsky proudly state that he was "absolutely right" in asserting that "the real ascent of Socialist economy in Russia becomes possible only after the victory of the proletariat in the most important countries in Europe"?

BUT that will do. Even this series of facts is quite sufficient to confirm the indisputable existence of the Opposition's Social Democratic deviation, which it not only has not renounced, but which it has made still more profound at the XV Conference. Well, all the worse for the Opposition! The Soviet Communist Party will steadily continue the ideological struggle against the Opposition errors, against its deviations, against its attempt to replace Leninism by Trotskyism.

The Party will strengthen the ideological, political and organisational victory which it has secured over the Opposition.

Soviet economy enters the tenth year of proletarian dictatorship under the flag of success—success in the elimination of difficulties, success in the move forward towards industrialisation. The Soviet C.P. will enter the tenth year of the leadership of the world revolutionary movement, under the flag of Leninist unity, *i.e.*, unity based on the victory over fractional lack of principle, over Social Democratic deviations, based on unadulterated orthodox Leninism.



The Successes of the Canton Army

Tang Ping Tschan

ANTI-IMPERIALIST and anti-militarist movements among the workers and peasants appear in China as a result of a double oppression, on the one hand by the Imperialist Powers, on the other hand by those who wield military power in China.

Last year we lived through the Shanghai events, the various mass strikes in Hong-Kong, Canton, Sha-Mian, etc. Even the medium-sized and smaller merchants, as well as the intelligentsia, have played an energetic part in these anti-imperialist movements; and under the pressure of the masses demoralisation has spread among the militarists' troops. This last fact has helped towards the victory of the national revolutionary army of Canton in Central China.

The rapid development of the Chinese revolution has been based not merely on the military power but chiefly on the organisational power of the conscious masses. In the last two years we have seen the masses of workers and peasants take part in every anti-imperialist movement, and in the unification of the Kwantung province. In each struggle the workers and peasants have extended and strengthened their organisation.

According to the report of the Chinese General Federation of Labour, there were 600,000 organised workers on May 1st, 1925; on May 1st of this year 1,600,000 organised workers were represented at the Third Trade Union Congress. Last year the number of peasants organised in Kwantung was 200,000, while this year, at the Peasants' Congress, over 1,200,000 were represented by peasant delegates, who came from most of the provinces of China.

Peasants Organising

Under the influence of the successes of the Cantonese troops, the workers and peasants' organisations have grown considerably. It is clear that in the territory occupied by the Canton army the working masses have obtained political rights which enable them to strengthen their own organisations and so strengthen the revolutionary power. For example the number of organised peasants in Hunan has risen from 50,000 to more than 200,000. The trade unions of Hankow, forbidden under the rule of Wu-Pei-Fu, are once more beginning to be active.

The Chinese revolution can only become strong and develop through the support of the toiling masses. The successes of the revolutionary troops are rousing the masses in the territory occupied by the troops; and the masses once aroused drive the revolution forward. The strengthening of the popular power in these areas hastens on the one hand the disintegration of the military dictators and on the other hand threatens the privileges of the imperialist powers in China. This fact is a mighty safeguard for the success of the Chinese revolution.

Leninism thoroughly confirms our estimate of this process. On the national question Lenin emphasised the following points:—

(1) The anti-imperialist struggle of the Colonies and of all oppressed States is the only way to liberation from oppression.

(2) The most important colonies and dependent

states are already on the path towards national liberation. This inevitably causes world capitalism the greatest anxiety.

(3) The proletarian movement in the most advanced countries and the national liberation movement in the Colonies must unite for the common struggle against the common enemy, imperialism.

China Will Unite

Since the revolutionary forces are day by day becoming more and more concentrated, though covering more ground, and the opposing forces are more and more disintegrating and falling to pieces, it is clear that the revolutionary unity of China can be realised. On the basis of this fact we should like to consider the process of the development of the Chinese Revolution until its unification.

(a) Since 1911, the revolution has met with a series of obstacles. Owing to these obstacles the masses lost faith in their own powers and began to believe that the power of the imperialists was impregnable. This was why after 1911 the revolutionary movement declined. The successes of the Cantonese troops showed that the reign of the imperialists in China actually could be destroyed; this opened the eyes of the masses and filled them with self-confidence and revolutionary courage and the belief that national independence is not at all impossible.

(b) The military successes have liberated the toiling masses from the power of the military dictators in the areas occupied by the Canton troops. The Canton troops have occupied Wuchan (Wuchang, Hankow and Han-yang) which is the strategic transport point of China. In these cities there are also big factories and plants; as a result the workers' organisations are rapidly developing and the chief forces of the national struggle are inevitably increasing.

(c) China is an agrarian country. Over 80 per cent. of the inhabitants are peasants. The peasants of the Kwantung province have done tremendous work for the unification of that province. After Hunan was occupied by the Canton army, the peasant organisations became larger and stronger. In the same way the peasants of Hupe and Shan-Si have made great progress. The organisation of the Peasants' League is spreading more and more over the entire country. In the near future a general Peasant League of China will be formed.

Support from Bourgeoisie

The extension of the revolutionary area has resulted in a diminution of the burdens which the peasants have to bear, particularly war burdens. During the influx of the Canton troops, the middle and petty merchants of Hankow enthusiastically participated in the mass movement.

During the revolutionary development, there is to be noted a differentiation within the Chinese big bourgeoisie. Some of the leading personalities of the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce are opposed to Sun-Chang-Fang and support the Canton troops.

The unification of mass forces will undoubtedly result in revolutionary unity.

The Successes of the Canton Army—continued

The civil war among the Chinese militarists has always in recent years been instigated by the imperialist powers for the purpose of maintaining their dominating position.

The exploitation and oppression of the colonial and dependent countries by finance capital is one of the sources of life for imperialism; it enables imperialism to continue its domination. The imperialists try to support the Chinese reactionaries and militarists in order thereby to suppress the Chinese Revolution. The attitude of the imperialists to Chinese events must unquestionably be taken into consideration by us; but because of the contradictory interests of the imperialist powers in China they are no longer in a position to carry out a united policy.

What Britain Wants

(a) For Britain the main question is military intervention. When the Canton troops were at the gates of Youchow, Great Britain's cruisers prevented the march against Wuchang, following a series of unsuccessful negotiations between Great Britain, Japan and America. Great Britain did not wish to give up its plan for joint intervention. An article in the London "Times" of October 13th says:

"The Canton troops have already occupied the Yangtse Valley. The Canton Government happens to be the force in China which through a military expedition of an entirely new character has now acquired, by the seizure of Hankow, Hanyang, and Wuchang, a dominant position on the Middle Yangtse. The novel feature of this expedition is that it is the enterprise not of a general merely, not of an individual, but of a Party, and that it has achieved its victories not by arms only, but by discipline and by propaganda. The propaganda is specifically anti-British. The cry of the Cantonese army is the preposterous watchword, 'Down with British imperialism.' The organisers of the movement, the instructors in tactics and strategy, are not Chinese, not even extreme Chinese nationalists, but Russian Bolsheviks. How the Chinese nationalists and Russian Bolsheviks will combine, how this combination will work out in the long run, it is impossible at the moment to say. The Moscow "Pravda" openly exults in the dilemma with which the British Empire is thus confronted, and in a recent issue brings it into connection with the coal strike, which, in its opinion, hampers British action in China. On the Yangtse, then, and at the mouth of the West River in China, very grave issues of British foreign policy are now being raised. They are our own vital concern, and it is for our Government to deal with them circumspcctly, with due consideration of all the complex circumstances, but with unflagging energy in the defence of the great and openly menaced interests of the British Empire."

It is true that the success of the revolutionary troops is partly due to the discipline of the troops, but chiefly it was achieved by the anti-imperialist movement of the masses. Ruthless struggle against imperialism and militarism is the only way for the Chinese people to achieve liberation. By an "unflagging" energy this

Conservative paper means simply the application of iron might, military intervention. But because Great Britain's interests in China are incompatible with American and Japanese imperialism, and because the British proletariat at home is opposed to the Government, the unrest and disturbances in the colonies continue and England has to hold its hand.

America's Game

(b) The methods of oppression used by the United States are much more refined than those of Great Britain and Japan. It uses not military power but the Chinese bourgeoisie as its instrument. When the Canton armies entered Hankow, the American press greeted them with "sweet words." The New York "Times" wrote recently that if the Canton troops are able to restore order in the territory occupied by them, it might be very useful for China. "Fear of the occupation of Shanghai by Canton can only be entertained by the British. But if the leading advisers of Chiang-Kai-Shek (the Canton general) wish to annul the unequal treaties, this should be gradually carried out in a peaceful manner."

These words completely betray the attitude of American imperialism to Chinese events. American imperialism is interested that the national liberation movement should result in a victory for the bourgeoisie.

(c) The attitude of Japan towards the successes of the Canton troops has hitherto been ambiguous. On the one hand, it feared the revolutionary unity of China, which might become dangerous to its power in China; on the other hand, on account of the contradiction of interests between Japan and Britain, Japan does not wish to support the latter and thereby strengthen once more Britain's unstable power in China.

It is obvious that the imperialist powers are not of one mind in regard to the development of the Chinese revolution. This has resulted on the one hand in disintegration within the imperialist and military camp, and on the other hand it has furnished a favourable circumstance for Chinese revolutionary unity.

The Whole East Wakes

Will the imperialists abandon their privileges in China? Impossible! They may possibly, under pressure of events, change their methods of oppression. They may possibly concentrate their assistance on Chang-Tso-Lin in order to provoke Soviet Russia. The recent provocations of Chang-Tso-Lin on the Chinese Eastern Railway show that the imperialists, above all Japan and Britain, are thereby seeking compensation for their defeat in China.

The development of events in China will not only hasten China's revolutionary unity, but will also influence the development of the oppressed people of Eastern Asia and will strengthen them in the idea of independence. We recall an article by Lenin on "Asia's Awakening" in which he writes:

"Is not China noted as the embodiment of a country which has been sleeping for centuries? Nevertheless, political life is already seething in China. The social movement and democracy are developing like the waves of an immense sea. Following the Russian Revolution of 1905, the democratic revolution rapidly spread over the whole of

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Asia—in Turkey, Persia, China, etc., even in British India this tendency grows from day to day” (Lenin, “Pravda,” May 7th, 1913).

As a matter of fact, the present Chinese revolutionary movement has had an effect on all other colonial countries. Thus for example in the latter half of August 1926 a unity organisation was formed whose purpose it is to organise all nationalities and races for the struggle against oppression. The successes of the Canton armies without doubt have had a great influence on the Indonesian national liberation movement; this has been recognised by the Indonesians themselves.

We know that just at present the Dutch colonial government is conducting a vigorous campaign against the Communists. But the sharper the persecution the greater the sympathy of all civil servants and intellectuals for the proletarian party with which they are working in a united front against imperialism. Here too the Canton successes have contributed much; they will also have their effect in India and Korea, countries which share a common fate with China.

Aims of the Revolution

Our tasks in China grow commensurate with the extension and strengthening of the workers’ and peasants’ organisations through the development of the revolution. We know that in the last three years the workers and peasants have participated in every revolutionary movement, and have done so under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. We know that the imperialists will not abandon their privileges of their own free will, that the compromising Chinese bourgeoisie will continue to make pacts with the imperialists in order to destroy the revolution and to subject the masses of workers and peasants. Therefore our most important tasks are:

(a) The extension and strengthening of the workers’ and peasants’ organisations, which can be maintained only through a united and strict organisation of the proletariat, and through its taking the lead in the revolution; in this way the revolution can be transformed into a consistent one.

(b) Drawing in the middle and petty bourgeois into active participation in the national liberation movement, and destruction of its faith in the compromising big bourgeoisie.

(c) Strengthening and extension of the united front up to the last decisive struggle against imperialism and militarism.

(d) Extension and strengthening of the organisation of the Left Wing of the Kuomintang as the centre for the united front of all classes.

(e) Drawing the masses into participation in the exercise of power, in order to destroy the basis of feudal militaristic politics and to bring about spontaneous activity of the masses. This alone can ensure the victory of the Chinese Revolution.

(f) Support of the movement for a national assembly and for the annulment of the unequal treaties.

(g) Drawing up a clear agrarian programme with the slogan: “Land for the poor peasants!”

We know that the Chinese revolution is a part of the world revolution and that the national liberation movement of China is a part of the proletarian movement of the world. The Leninist conception of the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples leads to the conclusion that:

Lenin’s Formula

(1) The victory of the proletariat in the advanced countries cannot be secured without the victory of the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples against imperialism.

(2) The united revolutionary front is impossible without the active support of the proletariat of the advanced countries against the imperialism of their own countries.

Comrade Lenin also said at the Third World Congress “It is indisputable that the proletariat of the advanced countries must help the workers of the backward countries.” We know that the domination of the imperialists in China will be destroyed by the victory of the revolution. The imperialists will engage in a life and death struggle against the revolution; that is, in the words of the London “Times” they will combat it with “unflagging energy.” They will seek to suppress the Chinese Revolution by all possible means. Comrade Lenin wrote an article entitled: “Backward Europe and Advanced Asia” in which he wrote as follows: “In civilised advanced Europe, there is a highly developed technique and a very rich and many-sided civilisation, but now we find ourselves in a historical period where the bourgeoisie in its fear of the growth and strengthening of the working class maintains all the backward dying remnants of the Middle Ages. The frightened bourgeoisie unites with all reactionary forces in order to make the vacillating wage-slave obedient.”

’Ware War

The imperialists will not watch the successes of the Chinese Revolution idly. The struggle against military intervention in China by the imperialists means in fact a struggle of the proletariat against the danger of war. On the other hand at the last Trade Union Congress, a resolution was adopted entirely under the pressure of the masses which was directed against the activity of the British Government in China. Here as everywhere, the reformists sought to prevent the adoption of the resolution by passive speeches and phrases—as they have for example betrayed the General Strike.*

At the same time we have the experience that when it can be said that the Chinese Revolution is successful, the power of imperialism will thereby be inevitably weakened. That is a pre-requisite for the victory of the working class of the world. Therefore the West European proletariat has this important task before it during the Chinese Revolution: namely, the immediate energetic development of the movement. That is the bulwark of the movement of the working class against the danger of the world war.

* At the British Party Congress, at the suggestion of comrade McManus, a resolution was adopted declaring the British workers must use all means in order to force the British Government to withdraw all its military and naval forces from China.

Comrade Trotsky Defends Himself

A. Martynov

COMRADE TROTSKY, commander in chief of the Allied Opposition, came to the Fifteenth Party Conference with his old "tested" slogan—"Neither war nor peace." He came to the Conference after having lost a general engagement.

He and his allies had called the Party majority the "Stalin fraction" and charged it with national narrowness and degeneration, such as overtook the French revolutionaries after Thermidor. They had put forward against the Party a "platform" unheard of hitherto in the ranks of the Communist Party. This platform talked about "colouring" the actual state of affairs, official optimism on the general question of economics and pessimism on the question of wages, disinclination to see the "kulak," and thereby connivance with the "kulaks," insufficient attention to the poor peasants, a particularly rough pressure in working class centres, disinclination to understand the lessons of the last Soviet election—all of which meant a real and not merely verbal preparation of the soil for Menshevik and Socialist revolutionary influence. They had organised an illegal fraction and according to all the rules of underground conspirative strategy, were getting ready to give decisive battle to the Party in October.

The workers' nuclei in their entirety stood in defence of their Leninist Party and the Opposition suffered an inglorious defeat. In the words of the former Oppositionist, comrade Andreyev, the leaders of the Opposition came to the conclusion, "First, that the Opposition had come up against the reactionary (1) mood of the working class, secondly, that the economic situation had proved to be not so bad as they thought." This compelled them to agree to a partial capitulation. They presented a "statement" in which on the one hand they renounced further fractional struggle, and on the other hand to say, "We have been at variance with the majority of the Congress and the Central Committee on a number of questions of principle. And we still continue to hold these views now." Comrade Trotsky's field-m Marshals, Zinoviev and Kamenev, were not very sure as to what their present views were. This is obvious from the following three facts:

A Bit Mixed

(1) Comrade Zinoviev, at the October Plenum of the Central Committee, stated: "Comrade Kamenev, I and certain other comrades said (in the Political Bureau) that in these theses (comrade Rykov's and Tomsky's) there were three or four points containing sharp attacks on the so-called 'Opposition.' We consider that if these points were removed from the respective resolutions . . . it would make it possible in principle, for us to vote for the adoption of these resolutions as a basis." So that comrades Kamenev and Zinoviev were prepared then, in spite of their "principles," to accept as a basis the resolutions of the Central Committee which they had not so long ago considered as degenerate.

(2) In the above-mentioned "statement" signed by the six, they say: "Each of us undertakes to defend our

views only in forms established by the statutes and decisions of Congresses and the Central Committee in the conviction that whatever among our views is correct will be adopted by the Party in the course of its future work." In other words they themselves admitted that there were correct and incorrect points in their views, some stuff of good quality and also some cheap and shoddy goods.

(3) Finally, after having asked at the October Plenum for the right to speak at the Conference in defence of their views, and this right having been granted, they did not show any inclination to utilise this right in the discussions on the reports of comrades Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky. They thus refused to fulfil their Party duty—to aid the Party in drawing up a correct policy on all the most important problems of economic, trade union and international policy; thereby they confirmed that on these principal problems they could give nothing useful and acceptable to the Party.

Comrade Trotsky's marshals having lost their army at the same time lost their heads. But comrade Trotsky himself, accustomed in his political career to splendid isolation, came to the Conference with a proud mien in the hope that he would succeed in concluding a "Brest Litovsk" peace with the Party while waiting for better times.

"What is there Social-Democratic about Us?"

In the resolution on the report of comrade Stalin, the Opposition is accused of a "Social-Democratic deviation." Comrade Trotsky in his speech for the defence expressed the greatest consternation at this. "We disputed concerning the rapidity of industrialisation, and I was among those who pointed out that the present rate of progress was inadequate; but, comrades, I do not see here anything Social-Democratic. We insisted that the differentiation in the countryside demands an increase in the burden of taxation on the comfortable upper strata of the middle peasants, and more energetic pressure on the "kulaks." We proposed that 40 per cent. of the village poor be totally exempt from taxation. What is there Social-Democratic here I should like to know? We considered . . . that a rise in wages, if only a modest one, is a necessary pre-requisite to a rise in the productivity of labour . . . and here, too, there is nothing Social-Democratic."

Comrade Trotsky is a fine, a brilliant advocate. Indeed, in the desire to accelerate industrialism, to smash the "kulak," to aid the peasant poor and increase the wages of the workers, a Communist can see nothing Social-Democratic. But that is not the question. The question is, with what concrete measures in the present concrete situation does the Opposition intend to benefit the toiling classes of the U.S.S.R.? That is the crux of the question. Comrade Trotsky should have spoken about this in the discussions on the speeches of comrades Rykov and Tomsky, but then he preferred to keep prudently silent. And this was no mere accident.

To raise wages is the duty of the Communist Party and not for one moment does it forget this. But when

Comrade Trotsky Defends Himself—continued

the Opposition proposes to separate this problem from the productivity of labour, raising wages independently of the increase of productivity of labour, they thereby display indifference towards Socialist construction, or lack of faith in it; they propose in a Socialist republic the same tactics as Communists are obliged to apply in a bourgeois State. These tactics are also recommended to our workers by the Mensheviks of the "Sozialisticheskyy Vestnik."

To advocate the greatest possible speeding up of industrialisation is a good thing, and our Party decided to do this at the Fourteenth Party Congress, against the will of certain Oppositionists (Sokolnikov and others). But when the Oppositionists propose that for this purpose we should raise the wholesale prices of goods (proposal of comrade Piatakov) and squeeze capital from the Co-operatives, pumping it into industry, they thereby propose to increase the cost of goods for the working class, to hand trade over to private capitalists, to undermine the stabilisation of the currency and disrupt the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry. This is already a most decided deviation towards Social-Democracy.

Capital from Capitalists Only?

To transfer the burden of taxation from the poor peasant to the "kulaks" is a good thing, and our Party is doing it: 15 per cent. of the upper section of our peasant farms pay 40 per cent. of the total agricultural tax, while 25 per cent. of the entire peasantry are absolutely exempted from the tax. But the Opposition regard the tax on the "kulak" and "Nepman" as the only or at any rate the chief source for the accumulation of capital. Comrade Kamenev said at the conference: "If the viewpoint that the accumulations of the "kulak" and the "Nepmen" are only growing very slightly, was to prevail in the Party, where would we obtain the material resources—inside the country—necessary for industrialisation?" These words can only have one meaning: it is not the proletariat in its own Socialist industry which accumulates the necessary capital, not the main masses of the peasantry as they improve their enterprises, who create accumulations which are brought into State industry through the Co-operatives, but only the "kulaks" and the "Nepmen" can pile up capital in our country.

This means that our economics in the countryside are doomed to purely capitalist development; and in view of this elemental immutable tendency there will only be one thing left for us to do: let the "kulaks" grow and from time to time shear their wool.

In full accordance with this the Oppositionists assert that the differentiation in the countryside in the Union, despite the proletarian dictatorship and the Socialist hold on all commanding heights, is taking place in the same way as in capitalist States. The fact proved by statistics that in our country, thanks to the economic policy of the Soviet Government, the proportion of landless peasants and the proportion of tiny farms is decreasing from year to year, that there is thus taking place in our country a decrease in the proportion of farms without cattle and with few cattle (having from two to four head of cattle) that in our

countryside there is to be observed a general rise in the level of all groups of farms, including, of course, the well-to-do, that proletarianisation is taking place to a large extent as a result not of a decline of agriculture, but of the over-population of the villages—this series of facts does not exist for our panicky Oppositionists.

Countryside not a Colony

Their estimation of the nature of our State is of the same kind. At first, comrade Trotsky tried to assert that our State "was far from being a proletarian State." Now comrade Kamenev has already resurrected Lenin's formula that we have a "proletarian State in a country with a predominating peasant population and with bureaucratic distortions." But what conclusions did he draw from this? The first conclusion: "The lower floors of the edifice of the State Power during the everyday work are actually not in the hands of the purely factory proletariat, but in the hands of the peasantry." That is to a considerable extent correct. But what was the second conclusion drawn from this? Under such conditions, how could the proletarian dictatorship be preserved? It would appear by increasing the leadership of the proletariat and the Party over the peasantry. But that does not satisfy comrade Kamenev. His conclusion is different: "We must fight against this by drawing in the workers, by proletarianising the State."

What does that mean? It means that comrade Kamenev wants to proletarianise the minor official posts in the countryside, that he does not believe in the possibility of Socialist regeneration of the peasantry, that he, therefore, wants to remove the peasantry from active participation in Soviet Socialist construction and that he, like his fellow thinker comrade Preobrazhensky, advises the proletariat to treat the countryside as a colony.

If to all this "positive" programme of the Opposition we add also the unprecedented demagoguery it engaged in amongst the non-Party masses, the unheard-of accusations which it brought against its own Party and the dislocation it endeavoured to introduce into the Sections of the Comintern, then it will be clear to any Communist that the accusation that our opposition is a "Social-Democratic deviation" is one hundred per cent. true. Comrade Zinoviev himself was compelled to admit at the October Plenum of the Central Committee that "evidently things have got to such a pass that the disputes within the old guard had been utilised by a third force, i.e., a counter-revolutionary force."

Silence on Concrete Issues

All this concrete policy of the Opposition was discussed in the Party before the Conference, and was also discussed at the Conference on the first three points of the agenda. The Opposition did not take part in the discussions, feeling its absolute powerlessness to defend before this meeting of responsible comrades what it had been unable to defend in the rank and file workers' nuclei.

The Opposition had already become completely bankrupt on questions of concrete policy before the Conference; but in order to avert a repetition of such errors, bordering on criminality, the Party had to get to the theoretical root of the matter. The only theoretical

Comrade Trotsky Defends Himself—continued

basis for all these errors in any way consistent can be found in Comrade Trotsky's theories of the motive forces of the Russian Revolution, in his famous "Theory of Permanent Revolution," which builds an ideological bridge between Communism and Menshevism. Therefore the Central Committee made this theoretical problem the last point of the agenda. This would seem to be only natural, but comrade Trotsky on this matter also again expressed extreme consternation. He can by no means understand "why it was necessary to retreat far back from these real difficulties of opinion—actual and serious differences engendered by the present state of our economics, surrounded by imperialist development—and base the differences on the interpretation of the nature of our revolution in general."

But comrade Trotsky, trying to find a scapegoat, could only explain this by one thing—the Party Conference he says, was powerless to prove the existence of a "Social-Democratic deviation" in the positive programme of the opposition and, therefore, tried to sidetrack the question. If the merit of a good lawyer consists in making white appear black, and black appear white, then comrade Trotsky is a brilliant lawyer; one would think that the majority of the Central Committee and not the Opposition had evaded participation in the discussion of questions on the concrete platform of the Opposition. It would seem as if the Conference had not devoted several sessions to practical questions, while the Opposition maintained deathlike silence!

"My Personal Writings on Casual Matters."

Comrade Stalin in his report, in order to characterise the specific views of comrade Trotsky on the motive forces of the Russian Revolution—in which he has always differed from Leninism—made a number of quotations from his works. Comrade Trotsky is indignant at this also: "Now, at the end of 1926, in order to define the present views of what is termed the 'Opposition' on the main questions of economic policy, quotations have been taken from my personal works from 1917 to 1922, and not later, and in any case not from the chief works, I repeat, but from those which I wrote on quite casual matters."

Comrade Trotsky like an ostrich had his head in the sand and thinks no one will see it. Superfluous modesty! Comrade Trotsky is a sufficiently notorious political figure for the Party to have a good look at him, for the Party to study well his political biography, Comrade Trotsky wants to picture things as if the most outstanding extracts from his writings, characterising his famous theory of permanent revolution, were written "on casual matters" and have no connection whatsoever with the present Opposition which he now leads.

In order to clear the mist created by comrade Trotsky, I will briefly recall a number of data from his political life (I have done this in detail in my pamphlet, "At the Sources of Trotskyism"). In the old "Iskra" group, comrade Trotsky was very much to the Left; he "dissociated" himself from Liberalism in the sharpest form. But nevertheless, at the time of the split between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks he found himself in the camp of the Mensheviks. What

did he stumble on then? In his book "Our Political Divergencies," published after the 1904 split, he termed "excellent" an article by Starover in which was written: "The idea of the proletariat leading the struggle for freedom is replaced by the idea of a struggle for freedom in which the proletariat is allotted a subordinate place." The "Left" Trotsky was thus in 1904 in full agreement with an "excellent" article by Starover (Potressov) asserting that the task of realising the hegemony of the proletariat, which the old "Iskra" had subjectively set itself, had suffered bankruptcy.

What did this first fall of comrade Trotsky prove? It proved that comrade Trotsky continued as before to consider necessary a most ruthless struggle of the proletarian party against the middle bourgeoisie, but at the same time did not understand that the proletariat can only secure victory by fulfilling the role of leader of the peasantry and in general of the petty bourgeois democracy.

What Use is a Party?

From the failure to understand this, there arose another error. To get preponderating control and leadership needed desperate efforts from the Party to guard the proletariat against the influence of the petty bourgeois classes which it was preparing to lead. This presupposed an iron discipline of the Party and Jacobin intransigence. As comrade Trotsky did not understand the need for this leadership by the proletariat, as he also did not understand the internal Party structure arising therefrom, he slipped into vulgar Menshevism also on organisational questions, and in the book mentioned above howled together with the Mensheviks: "Down with the barrack-like factory discipline of the Party!" "Down with bureaucratic centralism!" "Down with Jacobinism!"

Is it not true, that these errors of Trotsky proved to be not quite so "casual" and "accidental" in his political career? Is it not true that here there is a very intimate connection with what Trotsky said not so long ago in 1923, in his book "The New Course" and with what he says now?

It is just from this source that comrade Trotsky developed with the help of Parvus his famous "Theory of Permanent Revolution," the substance of which was that he under-estimated the role of the peasantry in our revolution, and forecasting a future inevitable betrayal by the peasantry proposed to jump over the stage of democratic dictatorship by the proletariat and peasantry and steer a direct course of Socialist revolution in Russia, reckoning on immediate aid to the Russian proletariat from the Socialist Revolution in the West.

"Permanent Revolution"

Taking into consideration the "inevitability" of a split between the proletariat and peasantry, comrade Trotsky wrote at that time (in 1905): "Without the direct State support of the European proletariat, the working class of Russia will not be able to maintain itself in power and transform its temporary rule into a prolonged Socialist dictatorship. One cannot doubt this for one moment. But on the other hand, it cannot be doubted that the Socialist revolution in the West will allow us directly to transform the temporary rule of the working class into the Socialist dictatorship." Such was the substance of the theory of permanent revo-

Comrade Trotsky Defends Himself—continued

lution, put forward by comrade Trotsky in 1905 and defended by him in 1922 and later.

During the epoch of the Stolypin reaction, comrade Trotsky slid from the heights of the Socialist dictatorship in Russia, to the "petition campaign" and the August alliance with the Mensheviks who wished to dissolve the Party. Was this fall a mere chance? No. It arose from the same fundamental error of comrade Trotsky: when the wave of the agrarian movement in Russia subsided and when the revolutionary processes in the countryside acquired the concealed form of a molecular process, the peasantry completely disappeared from comrade Trotsky's field of vision and so he began together with the Menshevik liquidators to preach a narrow sectarian workers' policy, foreign to the wide revolutionary standpoint.

When the world war broke out, comrade Trotsky opposed comrade Lenin's defeatist slogans, calling them "Social-Democracy upside down" and put against Lenin's slogan of a revolution in one country, namely in Russia, the slogan of a simultaneous revolution throughout Europe to result in the creation of the United States of Socialist Europe. Was this mere chance? No. It arose from the same fundamental error: on the one hand from lack of faith in the internal forces of the revolution in our backward agrarian country, and on the other hand from the utopian idea that the proletarian revolution in Russia would inevitably coincide with the Socialist Revolution throughout the whole of Europe.

Not "Casual" Deviations

When comrade Trotsky, on the eve of the transition to the N.E.P., during the trade union discussion, proposed making a further step in the development of military Communism by merging the trade unions in the apparatus of the State power, was this by chance? No, it arose from the same fundamental error—the failure to understand the mutual relations between the proletariat and the peasantry.

Comrade Trotsky at the time of the "scissors" began to raise a panic, but was not able to point out any concrete plan, he proposed opening a thorough discussion on the necessity of "planning" in general; was this by chance? No, it arose from the same old mistrust in the internal forces of the Russian Revolution and the possibility of overcoming the internal contradictions between the proletariat and the peasantry if the victorious proletarian revolution in the West did not come to our aid. There is no need for us to enlarge here on the fact that the present Opposition platform is bound up with this radical error of comrade Trotsky.

We see that it is absurd to represent as casual those sayings of comrade Trotsky which have once more been exposed by comrade Stalin; they arise from the very nature of Trotskyism. And in the same way it is not by mere chance that comrade Trotsky succeeded in becoming the head of the new Opposition: the extremely difficult task confronting the Party at the present time of transition from the restoration process to new equipment of production engenders lack of faith and pessimism on the part of comrades who have always lost their heads at critical moments. And for the ideological reinforcement of this lack of faith, no better theory than

the theory of comrade Trotsky. This theory is the most convenient bridge for the transition point from Bolshevism to Menshevism. Without Left revolutionary phrases, Menshevism cannot be dragged into a single corner of our Party.

"I with Lenin, and Lenin with Me."

Comrade Trotsky understands very well that to preach Trotskyism openly in our Party is inconceivable, that at the present time it is absolutely useless. Therefore in his speech for the defence he endeavoured to prove in every possible way that in his "main works," in the works which for some reason or other his opponents do not want to quote, he says what Lenin says, and that on the other hand comrade Lenin frequently says exactly the same things as Trotsky says in the incriminating places, only in slightly different words.

Comrade Trotsky quotes a number of his works, many of which were written on the instructions of the Party, in which he said that the October Russian Revolution is a Socialist revolution, that our proletariat has Socialist commanding heights in its hands, that we are now successfully building up Socialism, etc. This is all very well, and if comrade Trotsky had not said and written this, there would have been no place for him either on the Political Bureau or on the Central Committee or in the Communist Party at all. But that is not the point. The question is where and when did comrade Trotsky say, if only once, that we can not only build, but also build up Socialism with our own forces, without the aid of the State power of a victorious European proletariat? Nowhere and never.

What is still worse is that comrade Trotsky now tries to falsify the views of comrade Lenin, interpreting them in the Trotskyist sense. For this purpose, he quotes a manuscript of Lenin entitled, "The Stages, Direction and Perspectives of the Revolution," written at the end of 1905 and published in the Fifth Lenin Symposium. Comrade Trotsky takes a few phrases from their context and concludes: "I very much fear, comrades, that if it was said that this quotation was a malicious product of Trotskyism many people would believe it." As far as I am concerned, I fear something else: if comrades were to compare in full what comrade Lenin said in the context, in this manuscript of 1905, with what comrade Trotsky quoted at the conference, they would say comrade Trotsky is now engaged in the unworthy task of falsifying Lenin; and comrades said and proved this at the conference.

Lenin's View

Comrade Lenin in this manuscript sketches six consistent stages in the perspective of the Russian Revolution of 1905. He pictures the fourth stage as follows: "The Labour movement is victorious in the democratic revolution with the passive watchful waiting of the Liberals and the active support of the peasantry . . . The rising of the peasants is victorious, the power of the landowners is broken" ("revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry"). The fifth step: "The Liberal bourgeoisie, which took a wait-and-see position in the third period, and was passive in the fourth, becomes openly counter-revolutionary and organises in order to take away from the proletariat the conquests of the revolution. Amongst the peasantry its entire well-to-do section and a con-

Comrade Trotsky Defends Himself—continued

siderable proportion of the middle peasantry also 'have opinions,' are becoming calm, turning round towards the side of counter-revolution in order to get power out of the hands of the proletariat and poor peasants sympathising with the proletariat." The sixth stage: "On the basis of the relations that had been formed in the fifth period, a new crisis and a new struggle grows and breaks out; the proletariat is struggling to preserve the democratic conquests for the sake of the Socialist upheaval. This struggle would be almost completely without hope for the Russian proletariat alone, and its defeat would be as inevitable as the defeat of the German revolutionary parties in 1848-49 or as the defeat of the French proletariat in 1871, if the European Socialist proletariat did not come to the aid of the Russian proletariat. . . . Under such conditions, the Russian proletariat can secure a second victory. Things are not so hopeless. The second victory will be the Socialist Revolution in Europe. The European workers will show us 'how it is done' and then, together with them, we will make the Socialist Revolution."

The Difference

That is what Lenin wrote in 1905. And what did comrade Trotsky write at that time under the conditions of 1905? He said that the Russian proletariat would accomplish a direct Socialist Revolution, and meeting with the resistance of the tremendous majority of the peasantry would find support in the victorious Socialist Revolution in the West. Do these things resemble each other? Not a bit.

Comrade Lenin was speaking of the transition of a considerable portion of the middle peasantry to the side of the counter-revolution under conditions of a victorious democratic, i.e., bourgeois revolution, in which the development of capitalist relations in the countryside had not yet come up against any obstacles; comrade Trotsky was speaking of the inevitable transition of the majority of the peasantry to the side of the counter-revolution under conditions of the Socialist revolution of the proletariat. That is the first fundamental difference.

Yesterday and To-day

Secondly Lenin, in saying that the Russian Revolution could save itself from a restoration only if it got help from the European Socialist proletariat, only if the Russian Democratic Revolution could be transformed in a certain period into a general European Socialist revolution, had in view the situation of 1905, the pre-war situation, when the capitalist world was not yet broken up into different camps fighting one another, when the process of transforming the democratic revolution into a Socialist revolution could only be a very long and painful one in Russia, when in view of the single unbroken front of the entire European bourgeoisie the Russian proletariat could not accomplish a Socialist revolution with their own forces alone, when this could be accomplished successfully only one by one in different countries. Comrade Trotsky, however, considered and considers as inevitable the defeat of the Russian Socialist revolution without first-aid from the victorious European proletariat, under present-day con-

ditions of the post-war epoch, when the contradictions between the capitalist States have become extremely acute. This is the second radical difference.

Finally, during the present epoch comrade Lenin considered that all the peasantry could be in alliance with the proletariat at a time of the Democratic Revolution (February Revolution); on the seizure of power by the proletariat even now he counted only on the close alliance of the proletariat with the poor peasants with the neutralisation of the wavering middle peasantry. Only after the reinforcement of political power by the proletariat did comrade Lenin bring forward the problem of establishing once more a close alliance between the proletariat and the entire middle peasantry. Does that resemble in any way what comrade Trotsky says, about the inevitability of growing contradictions between the proletariat and the peasantry in the present day phase? Not in the least. What comrade Lenin said has until now been entirely confirmed by history. What comrade Trotsky said has until now been refuted by history.

Just about as convincing are comrade Trotsky's references to the works of Lenin written in 1918, 1919 and 1921, in which he said that we should have to perish if the revolution did not arrive very quickly in other countries. One must be absolutely blind and quite devoid of any understanding of historic perspectives to compare the position of those days with the present time. In those days, we were confronted on the one hand with the growing revolutionary wave in the West, and on the other hand we were in the clutches of intervention, ruin and famine. What did comrade Lenin have in mind when, under those conditions, he said that our revolution would perish if the Revolution in Europe did not come? Did he have in mind that Russia could not build up Socialism with its own internal forces? Not by any means! He did not say that then. He only had in mind that ruined and starving Russia would be squashed by intervention if the European revolution did not come.

Ten Years Needed

But as soon as it became clear that on the one hand the European revolution was to be delayed, and on the other that we were beginning to overcome the ruin and to revive our industry with our own forces, comrade Lenin began to emphasise more and more clearly and definitely that we were building and could build up Socialism with our own forces.

By 1921, at the commencement of the NEP., comrade Lenin wrote that the realisation of a direct transition to Socialism under conditions of electrification was quite conceivable in our country. He added: "We understand perfectly well that this condition alone demands at least ten years of work in the first place, and a reduction of this period is only conceivable in the event of the victory of the proletarian revolution in such countries as Great Britain, Germany, America."

Thus Lenin was then already speaking of the Socialist Revolution in other countries as a condition for reducing the period of our transition to Socialism, but not as the only way of safeguarding it. At the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, when we were already experiencing a partial stabilisation in the currency, and when certain sections of our industry were

Comrade Trotsky Defends Himself—continued

no longer being run at a deficit, comrade Lenin emphasised that he spoke of State capitalism in Russia in a very conditional sense, and asked what kind of State capitalism it was when our proletariat had all the Socialist commanding heights. Finally, in his article on Co-operation, written just before he died, comrade Lenin said definitely and with emphasis that in our Republic "there are all the necessary and adequate conditions for building up a Socialist society."

To interpret any of these contentions of Lenin in the Trotskyist sense, one must turn one's back on the onward trend of development, and pull the Party backwards, one must utilise the methods of the famous "historic school" about which Marx said "history showed it," as the God of Israel showed Moses, "only its hind-quarters."

"Give us Direct Answers to these Damned Questions."

Our Party is face to face with the task of constructing Socialism. The proletariat wants to know: can we build up Socialism with our own internal forces, if we are not squashed by military intervention, or is it impossible? In the first case the proletariat with faith and heroism will perform its work as it has done until now; in the second case, realising that we are doomed to move step by step until we are made safe by the victorious revolution in the West, it will fall into despair and pessimism at each difficult turning point, at every inevitable economic difficulty. It is impossible to evade giving a categorical reply to the question. The Party made comrade Trotsky give this reply, and this reply was in the negative.

Comrade Stalin in basing the possibility of the victory of Socialism in one country on the profound inequality in the development of capitalism in the imperialist epoch, a law formulated by comrade Lenin, alluded to the fact that comrade Lenin was already writing in 1915, in the article "On the Slogan of the United States of Europe": "Inequality of economic and political development is undoubtedly a law of capitalism. It hence follows that at first the victory of Socialism is possible in a few or even in one capitalist country taken separately. The victorious proletariat of this country, having expropriated the capitalists and organised surplus production in its own country, would rise up against the remaining capitalist world, attracting to its side the suppressed classes of other countries, raising them in insurrection against the capitalists, acting, in the event of necessity, even with military force against the exploiting classes and their States." Comrade Trotsky in replying to comrade Stalin, said: "Capitalism undoubtedly develops very unequally in all countries even now, but in the nineteenth century this inequality was more than in the twentieth. In that period the inequality of capitalist development was sharper, more profound It is just for this reason, that finance capital is the most mobile and flexible form of capital, it is just because of this that imperialism develops more 'equalising' tendencies than pre-finance capital." This statement, which is supported also by comrade Zinoviev, who has become comrade Trotsky's captive, is a typical product of modern opportunism. Comrade Lenin gave a worthy answer to this assertion in his book, "Imperialism—the Last Stage of Capitalism": "The

talk of Kautsky about ultra-imperialism," wrote Lenin in this work, "promotes, among other things, the profoundly erroneous idea, grist for the mills of the apologists of imperialism, that the rule of finance-capital decreases the inequalities and contradictions within world economy, whereas it actually increases them." Comrade Trotsky's alliance with comrade Lenin has thus again shown a profound cleavage.

A "Stupidity" by Marx

Comrade Trotsky also spoke of the impossibility of asserting that we could build up Socialism with our own forces if we isolated ourselves from the international situation and the development of world economy. In connection with this, comrade Trotsky remarked: "One can walk through Moscow in the middle of January, stark naked if one can dodge the weather and the militia; but I am afraid that neither the weather nor the militia will dodge you if you try to make the experiment." That is very witty. But does comrade Trotsky know, for instance, that so "stupid" a fellow as Karl Marx wrote the first and second volumes of "Capital" by dodging the fact that in capitalist society there are not only capitalist workers, but also other intermediary classes, dodging the fact that in every modern capitalist State, side by side with capitalist relations there also exist the relics of other old economic strata? Was it by chance that Marx "went stark naked" in this respect? No, this was necessary in order to discover the internal dominant laws of capitalism. In saying that our Republic can build up Socialism with the internal forces of our economy, if our economic development is not interrupted by violent intervention, our only sin is that we remain true to Marxist method. We do this in order to distinguish logically that which depends upon us from that which does not depend upon us.

But what is to be done in respect to our economy being linked up with world economy? Very simple. In asserting that we have all the premises for building up Socialism with our internal forces, we assert two things at once. In the first place that with a correct economic policy the Socialist elements of our economy will grow more rapidly than the capitalist elements, which will remove the contradiction between the proletariat and the peasantry. Secondly, that with a correct economic policy, the tempo of our economic development can catch up and outpace the tempo of the economic development of capitalist countries, as a result of the advantages of Socialised production; by this our weakness in competing on the world market will be overcome.

Lack of Faith

Comrade Trotsky and comrade Kamenev assumed that this second condition depends not upon us, not upon our internal forces, but upon the external forces of world economics, that we are doomed to fall into ever greater dependence upon world capitalist economy. Therefore they place military intervention and economic intervention in the same category. But this only goes to show their capitulatory mood and their lack of faith in the capacity of the proletariat of our backward country for Socialist creative work.

It is true that we are backward; but capitalist Russia before the war was no less backward. Why was

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she able in the '90's and even after the Japanese war, to rebuild herself economically, revealing only a slight tendency towards transformation into a colony, despite the fact that she was still enmeshed in feudal relics? Why can we not preserve economic independence, now that we have swept clean away the relics of feudalism and acquired all the great advantages of planned economy, since we have already shown that the tempo of our development can considerably exceed the tempo of the pre-war development of Russia? "It is a fact that the average yearly increase of industrial production in pre-war Russia from 1900 to 1913 was 3.87 per cent. We propose to increase our industry next year by 17 to 18 per cent. and in 1927-28 approximately by 12 per cent."

Slander!

The last argument which comrades Trotsky and Zinoviev bring forward against us is of a purely demagogic nature: "In saying that for ten years we shall be able independently to move forward towards Socialism, you assert," (say Trotsky and Co.), "that during the next ten years there will be no revolution in the West; you will, therefore, steer a course based on a firm stabilisation of European capitalism and on ten years of peaceful co-habitation of the U.S.S.R., developing towards Socialism, with the strengthening capitalist world, without wars and revolution." This is more than nonsense. It is malicious slander. Which way our Party leadership is steering at the present moment is shown sufficiently convincingly by the energetic support which our trade unions have rendered and are rendering to the British strikers, and the energetic support that our Party is rendering to the revolutionary movement in China, despite the fact that this creates great tenseness in political relations. We not only do not abandon the perspectives of an approaching revolution in other countries, we are convinced that in build-

ing up Socialism in Russia with the certainty of success, we are at the same time giving a powerful impulse to the development of world revolution. We insist that we can build up Socialism with our own forces, not because we abandon the perspective of the Revolution in the West, but because without understanding the laws of the development of our economics, without understanding the possibility of an independent move forward by us towards the complete realisation of Socialism, we should not be able to build it at all at this very moment; we should already be capitulating before all our economic difficulties, as the Oppositionists do.

Party Grown Up

What we have said here coincides with some variations with what comrades said at the Party Conference in reply to the speech of comrade Trotsky. Comrade Trotsky, who suffered overwhelming defeat in his attempt to "go to the people," and appeal directly to the working masses, suffered a second time a no less overwhelming defeat at the Conference. He came to the Conference reckoning on concluding a "Brest-Litovsk Peace" with the Party, then to wait entrenched in his positions until new economic difficulties would enable him once more to march into action under the banner of Trotskyism against Leninism. Comrade Trotsky was wrong in his calculations. He under-estimated the growth of the Party, he did not see that the Party had long ago emerged from that state when the relation between the leaders and the Party is the relation between "heroes" and "the crowd."

Our Party has grown up, has given our Party leadership a strong proletarian tendency. And, therefore, comrade Stalin was expressing the unanimous will of the Party when, in his concluding words, he said: "We have smashed you; if you think of once more going to the workers to sow among them mistrust in our Socialist construction, we will lay you out completely."

**BUILDING UP
SOCIALISM***By N. Bukharin*

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Communists and the "Confederazione del Lavoro"

E. Ercoli

WHAT ought to be the attitude of the Italian Communists towards the Reformist "Confederation of Labour"? The problem is not a special one. Although conditions in Italy to some extent differ from those prevailing in the majority of European countries, the problem is nevertheless one of general tactics. The question to be decided is whether the Communists who have always hitherto considered the Reformist Confederation as the centre for trade union unity in Italy, are to give up this stand in view of the new situation which has arisen in recent years.

The problem in its entirety might be formulated as follows: do conditions exist under which we must change our policy of fighting inside the reformist trade unions, and, if so, what are those conditions?

A study of the Italian problem will be only a contribution to the clarification of this general question, but this contribution will not be in vain if we succeed in giving our experiences in Italy in such a way that we can draw valid general conclusions from them.

Let us first clear the ground of one obstacle, the Fascist "unions." It would be radically wrong to maintain that because of the existence of Fascist trade union organisations which claim to be mass organisations, the Communists ought to modify their attitude towards the class trade unions and issue the slogan: "Everybody into the Fascist unions in order to wage the class struggle within them." If the Fascist trade unions were really, as claimed, organisations embracing a mass of about two million workers, then this radical change in tactics might be justified. The truth, however, is far from this.

The Fascist "Unions"

In the development of the Fascist trade unions two periods can be distinguished. In the first period the "corporations" for the most part, and especially when it was a question of the industrial proletariat, aimed at "trade union competition" with the class unions. They utilised their alliance with the employers, as well as force, in order to compel the workers to enter their ranks, while at the same time they attempted to function as trade union mass organisations.

In this period there were movements and even strikes which the Fascist trade unions incited, in order in this way to beat the class unions on their own ground. The result, however, was an overwhelming defeat for the "corporations." Not only did they fail to bring about a spontaneous rush of the workers into their ranks, but they did not even succeed in holding those who, under duress, had joined them. The movements of any consequence incited by them led to a disintegration of their meagre organised forces, and to a complete loss of all authority among the masses. The latter, though involved in constantly growing disorganisation, remained closely connected with their class bodies.

When the Fascists give statistics regarding this period, extending to the end of 1925, to show the masses affiliated to the corporations, they simply lie.

In the second period the State intervened by introducing the "trade union monopoly" of the Fascist organisations, in order to help them to victory. The intervention of the State took place on two different occasions. First, a law was passed forbidding the class organisations undertaking any agitation, in fact any kind of trade union activity. At the same time an enquiry began as to new regulations to be introduced regarding the whole trade union apparatus.

State Machinery

In this inquiry two tendencies were revealed. The first, represented by the Fascist organisations, advocated that the State should exercise pressure to get the workers to join the "corporations," but at the same time demanded a certain amount of autonomy for these unions. They further demanded that the organisations of the industrialists should also be represented on the central body of the Fascist "corporations," so that this body could exercise some control over the whole economic life of the country.

This tendency suffered a decisive defeat. While the industrialists' organisations received the Fascist name-plate, they remained separated from the so-called Labour organisations, and a State organ, the "Ministry of Corporations," was put above both. This through the State apparatus exercises control over the organisation and functions of the corporations of all grades. All the corporations are subordinated to this control so that it is difficult to maintain that they are anything but organs of the State.

In the rules of the "corporations" themselves, the meetings are allowed no rights at all. All officials are put in from above; their appointment must be confirmed "By Royal Decree" and the Government can remove them at any moment. They are nothing but Government commissars put at the head of these organisations, the members of which not only exercise no influence upon the fate of the union, but cannot even discuss its policy, which also depends in the last resort upon the decisions of the Government.

If a "corporation" is formed and recognised, then all the workers in this branch of industry may pay "trade union" dues. But these dues are paid by the employer not to the treasury of the union, but to the State treasury, which after deducting 10 per cent. distributes the money among the "corporations" according to a fixed schedule.

Union Dues Become Taxes

This means that trade union dues become a tax which the State applies, at its own discretion, to the maintenance of a network of officials.

In the same way, when a "corporation" concludes an agreement this must be referred first to the local government authorities and then to the Ministry of Trade for confirmation. Disputes as to the working of an agreement are adjusted by an authority that has the character not of an arbitration court, but of an organ of

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the State. The same authority decides on whether or not changes in agreements, etc., are necessary.

So that Fascist legislation has not only suppressed every form of democracy inside the Fascist trade unions, but it has also abolished the Fascist trade unions and replaced them by a State apparatus. Henceforth there can no longer be any talk of the affiliation of the masses to these trade unions, what is really under discussion is the affiliation of the masses to an apparatus for tax-gathering, for the exercise of pressure and police control over the workers.

Under these conditions the slogan of "Mass affiliation to the corporations" is nonsense. The struggle against the "corporations" is the struggle against the Fascist State.

Let us now turn to the class trade unions. Legally these are not recognised. They cannot legally carry on "any kind of trade union activity." They cannot legally conduct any movement, cannot formulate or present any wage claims to the employers, etc. They may, however, continue to exist as "actual organisations" and have open to them methods of agitation and the organisation of the masses in an illegal or semi-legal form.

What They Fear

But these roads are precisely those which the reformist leaders do not wish to tread. They willingly submit to the conditions established by Fascist legislation for the "Confederazione del Lavoro" and for the workers; yes, even more, driven by fear lest the workers exert pressure on them from the rear to force them to give up this cowardice and servility towards Fascism, they have in the past two years proceeded to destroy every form of democracy and control by the masses over the leaders within the class unions also. It is, therefore, a dual repressive apparatus that is weighing upon the Italian proletariat and hindering it from reorganising its forces and initiating any forward movement.

As a result the Italian proletariat is in a state of disorganisation equalled probably by no other proletariat in Europe. The numerical strength of the class organisations has shrunk to a minimum, to a figure that compared with the mass of industrial and agricultural workers is infinitesimally small.

The problem is, therefore: Can this class organisation still continue to be reckoned by us as the "centre of trade union unity" for the Italian proletariat? It contains in its ranks perhaps one per cent. of the Italian proletariat, and every vestige of democracy has been abolished in it, to be replaced by the uncontrollable power of a handful of enemies of the working class. Can we undertake the defence of this organisation, with the conviction that we are thereby performing a useful service to the Italian workers and to the development of the revolutionary movement?

The necessity for working in the reactionary trade unions was pointed out by Lenin in his "Infantile Disorders of Communism." He solved the question, however, on the basis of the principle that we must penetrate and work everywhere where the masses are to be found. But since no masses are any longer to be found in the ranks of the "Confederazione del Lavoro," why

should we be so set on its defence, why should we allow our members and the workers under our influence to enter it, why should we take the trouble to instil new life into these organisations, already shattered by history and thrown upon the scrapheap?

If we act otherwise, who can accuse us of splitting? A splitter is one who splits an organisation which gives unity, solidarity and self-consciousness to a mass of workers. But there are no longer any masses here, nor is there any class consciousness; there is nothing that could be split.

Lenin's Way

This argument may seem at first sight to be correct, but it suffers from the error that Lenin combated in his polemic against the "Infantile Disorder of Leftism." To look at it this way is to judge the errors of the mass organisations of the proletariat in an abstract way, divorced from the actual developing process in which they were formed, and in the course of which the masses joined them.

What was it that Lenin criticised so vigorously when he fought the Left Communists' idea of setting up "entirely new organisations free from democratic and bourgeois crimes" in place of the traditional reformist and reactionary trade unions? He derided a policy that would lead to a separation from the masses. Such a separation, however, is the immediate consequence of any inclination to look upon the gathering of masses around trade unions as a thing that can be brought about at once merely upon the initiative of an advance guard.

Lenin's fundamental idea is that the trade unions are not formed and developed by a mechanical and arbitrary process, but during a process of actuality, the consequences of which must be recognised and accepted as a starting point by everyone who desires to bring about a far-reaching change in them.

There can be no doubt that to an impatient advance guard the results of this process, the traditional ties that bind the masses to their old trade unions, may seem to be an obstacle—but the task of the advance guard is not merely to hurdle over this obstacle, but to bring the majority of the working class over it. Unless the masses are driven forward by a revolutionary wave of overwhelming force to follow in our wake, this can be achieved only if we are ready to work on the field created by all the previous evolution of the Labour movement.

The Masses

To one who shares this viewpoint a justification of desertion, and of splitting the Italian class unions, even by the formation of a new revolutionary trade union organisation, because of the present drop in membership, is not just a mistake; it is sheer lunacy.

We must not only ask ourselves in which direction the masses are moving, but also what are the conditions under which they are forced to move. We cannot simply say that only one per cent. of the Italian workers are to be found in the "Confederazione del Lavoro," but must also admit that the reason for this is that at the door of the Confederation are the bayonets of the Fascists, that joining the Confederation means giving one's name to the police and Black-shirts and finally that the leaders are themselves concerned with keeping the masses away.

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We cannot simply ask, "Where are the masses?" but must also inquire, "Where would they go were they free to do so?" And the reply given by a study of the influence on the working class of the various real and alleged working class parties, and of an investigation of the outcome of the results of the unity campaign conducted by the Communist Party, can be nothing else than: "Were the masses free to-day they would again go into the Confederazione del Lavoro, at the head of which stand the Reformists."

That means that this organisation embodies the hopes preserved by the Italian working class throughout its 30 years history, and that these hopes coincide with the prevalent class-consciousness of the Italian proletariat. Can we, the revolutionary vanguard, then oppose the fundamental forms in which this shows itself?

As long as the enemy fights bitterly against the class trade unions, our slogan must be "Defend the class trade unions!" This slogan changes into another—"Defend the Confederazione del Lavoro," since the Confederation is the concrete form in which the class unions appears before the proletariat.

Win the Confederation

In this attachment to the traditional organisation, however, there is also a negative element to be found, a spirit of conservatism and passivity which hinders the masses from fighting the treacherous and cowardly policy of the Reformist leaders. Against this we must fight with all our strength; the class organisation, the "Confederazione del Lavoro," must be defended not only against the Fascists, but also against its present leaders, who are actually collaborating with the Fascists to bring about the decline of the unions. We must lead the masses against them in order to win back the "Confederazione" for the class struggle and the revolutionary spirit.

This is a long and laborious task, but full of promise, one which confronts us with and will bring a solution to the problems of the conquest and revolutionary mobilisation of the masses in all its complications. Faced with this problem the intention to work out, in the desert created by the Fascist hurricane, some sort of plan—I know not what—for "new, clean, organisations freed from all bourgeois-democratic crimes," seems veritable childishness.

The problem, however, has a third aspect. At a moment when disorganisation goes so deep, when the trade union ranks are so depleted and the field of their activity and immediate influence so restricted, can the Communists confine themselves to work within the traditional trade union organisations? If they did so they would be committing an even graver error than would be the desertion of the Confederazione del Lavoro.

Blinded by such a formalism they would see only one side of the tasks devolving upon the vanguard of the working class, and consequently their tactic would be one-sided and incorrect. The doctrine of Marxism and Leninism has always two sides, as has the policy that proceeds therefrom. It contains the need for contact with the masses, the need to preserve the experiences

accumulated in the course of the practical development of the Labour movement, but at the same time it contains the need for driving the masses forward, for working within them as a ferment to carry them with us to a higher level of class consciousness.

This element would be lacking in the trade union work of the Italian Communists were they to fail to combine the activity they develop in the reformist trade unions with a wider activity among the masses, in order to create among the latter new organisations, and to bring them in all possible ways to the forefront of the organised class struggle.

Rousing the Factories

Side by side with the defence and capture of the trade unions, activity in the factories, is, therefore, necessary, the formation of workers' committees, the mobilisation of all who are employed around these committees, the establishment of contact between factory and factory, between town and town, between district and district through the calling of factory conferences of representatives elected by the factory hands.

The Communist Party of Italy has already started on this path. It has succeeded in calling into being workers' committees in enterprises in all industrial centres; the committees in the various factories have found mutual connections in a series of factory conferences in various towns, which are to be repeated periodically in each of them.

The Committee called into being in Milan, the largest industrial centre, has already directed movements extending throughout the entire country, and in the near future it will proceed with the calling of a nationwide workers' conference.

The results were undeniably good. An analysis of it confirms finally the correctness of the hostile attitude which the Party took towards the proposal to oppose the reformist trade unions in favour of an avowed or covert split. The non-Party workers and those of other Parties rally to us because our activity satisfies one of their basic desires. They feel that we want to combine the workers for action, and that our bitter struggle against the reformist leaders is intended to bring about a comprehensive and powerful unification of all class forces in a Confederation freed from traitors. If this were given up they would desert us and would succumb to inactivity and pessimism.

Building a Mass Movement

The Italian Communists must continue these tactics. They must strengthen more and more the organisational ties established by their activity among the working class. This is a necessary requisite for the establishment of a mass movement and a guarantee that the movement, upon its revival, will not imperceptibly fall back under the influence of the reformist leaders.

A second necessary pre-requisite, however, is that the Italian Communists—as they have hitherto done and as they now wish to do—should energetically reject every attempt to dissuade them from activity in defence of the trade unions, from the defence and conquest of the "Confederazione Generale del Lavoro." A surrender to the temptations of a split-inclined infantilism might cost us the role of leadership of the Italian proletariat, which the Party has won for itself by its activity among the masses.

The Communist Party of Belgium

Jules Humbert-Droz

BELGIUM is one of the most formidable strongholds of Social Democracy. The Belgian Labour Party (P.O.B.) with its trade unions, Co-operatives, mutual aid societies and "Palaces of Labour," is a very powerful organisation not only because of its numerical strength—650,000—but especially because of its close contact with the proletarian masses. In the whole Second International there is no Party more steeped in the ideas of reformism. The policy of the "sacred union" (Union Sacrée) which it followed during the world war has been maintained since the war ended.

A few small advantages, ephemeral and frequently illusory, which the P.O.B. has been able to secure for the workers by participation in the government and which its vast bureaucratic apparatus has cleverly exploited in order to dope the workers, has made possible a cynical betrayal of the interests of the proletariat which has not as yet resulted in the alienation of the masses.

In face of this colossus the small Communist Party of Belgium—800 members—seems feeble indeed; and the development of Communism in Belgium would appear to be an arduous and difficult task. The Communist Party of Belgium is confronted not only by the formidable trade union, co-operative and political organisation of the P.O.B.; it has also to contend with a feeling of unity firmly embedded in the mentality of the Belgian youth.

The small group which emerged from the P.O.B. to form the Communist Party seemed to be disrupters, secessionists from the Labour movement. For many years the feeling for unity which permeates the toiling masses, strengthened in Belgium by the organisational tradition of the P.O.B., has been one of the greatest obstacles to the development of our Party. Even to-day the P.O.B. is carrying on a bitter struggle against the Communist Party on this ground.

The Communist Party of Belgium has not escaped the perils of errors which arise from its position of extreme numerical weakness. For a long time it was imbued with the sectarian spirit, concentrating its atten-

tion and main efforts on the education of its few hundred members, on propaganda and agitation, without making an attempt to organise the influence gained, to recruit new members or even to utilising all its members for its work and campaigns.

However, in spite of its numerical weakness and its errors, which it is trying to make good, the Communist Party of Belgium exercises an influence which is out of all proportion to its small numbers, an influence which is steadily growing. This small Party of 800 members polled 34,000 votes during the parliamentary elections, on April 5, 1925, in those districts where it put up candidates. In the municipal elections on October 10, 1926, it polled 70,000 votes in the 64 districts where it put up a fight, a smaller area than that of the parliamentary elections.

Municipal elections offer a much less favourable ground for a Communist campaign than parliamentary elections, because local and often personal questions play a preponderating rôle; these figures therefore show that the Communist Party of Belgium has succeeded in gaining an influence which is rapidly spreading. Moreover the fact that the P.O.B. went in for polemics against the Communists during these last elections shows that the P.O.B. is fully aware of the effect of Communist propaganda and is beginning to think that its own influence over the masses may be impaired by it.

Expelling Communists

The growing influence of the Communist Party of Belgium is not limited to election times. It finds expression in the 6,000 readers of the "Drapeau Rouge," the daily organ of the Party, and its growing influence within the trade union movement, the effect of which is to develop a Left Wing which stands for trade union unity.

The reformist leaders have done their utmost to isolate the Communists from the workers organised in the trade unions. The "Mertens" motion to expel Communists from the unions, adopted by the Trade Union Congress, introduced into Belgium the Amsterdam splitting tactics. But although the Party is numerically weak, the reformist leaders who are trying to put into force the "Mertens" resolution are meeting with considerable hostility on the part of trade unionists to whom the unity of their organisation is sacred. This devotion to unity, which used to be an obstacle to the development of the Communist Party, is to-day telling against the reformists and to the advantage of the Communists who defend trade union unity.

Only recently, on October 2nd, 1926, the National Congress of the Union of Clerks rejected by 3,912 votes against 1,272 the proposal to expel our comrade Jacquemotte.

The "Unity" Left Wing is not a Communist movement. On certain questions there are serious differences of opinion between our Party and the "Unité" group, as well as between our Party and the "Left Wings" of the P.O.B. But the development of a trade union Left Wing and the existence of a Left Wing within the

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The Communist Party of Belgium—contd.

P.O.B. weaken considerably the reformist offensive against our Party, and are instrumental in making important sections of workers veer to the *Left*. It is now the duty of our Party to get these Left elements under our influence and to attach them to our Party.

Our Party has been able to gain in influence because of the political situation, which is very favourable to the development of Communism among the Belgian workers.

Belgian proletarians "have been enjoying" for more than ten years all the beauties and benefits of reformism and of class collaboration. Every day they can see its effects—bread is black and very dear, wages are less and less able to keep pace with rising prices, strikes and movements to enforce the workers' demands are inevitably betrayed by the trade union bureaucrats.

Vandervelde in Power

The Social Democrats have been in power since the April 1925 elections, the main characteristic of which was the veering to the Left of large sections of workers, petty bourgeois elements and peasants, who were dissatisfied with the inflationist and anti-Labour policy of the Catholic Conservative Government. The P.O.B., which is allied to the Christian Democrats in the Government, has shown itself unable to resist the policy of the financiers and industrialists. After pursuing a policy of inflation and depreciation of the franc (which resulted in high prices, a reduction in the real wage of the workers and a pauperisation of the petty bourgeoisie) and failing in their first attempt to stabilise the franc at the expense of the workers, the Social Democrats re-established "for the defence of the franc" the sacred union with the Catholic Conservatives and Liberals whom they had defeated in 1925; this they did at the bidding of the bankers against whom they had promised to fight.

They approved and defended before the masses the measures which the bourgeoisie is endeavouring to use in order to place the burden of the stabilisation of the franc on to the shoulders of the workers; the heavy indirect taxes, the handing over of the State railways and other public services to private capital, etc. All the efforts of the workers to get a rise in wages meet with resistance on the part of the industrialists and are sabotaged by their lackeys, the reformist leaders.

Although the Social Democrats have used all their skill to make their treacheries to the workers look like successes for the working class, the masses are beginning to see and to feel that they are the victims of a colossal fraud and that the P.O.B. has allied itself with their enemies. Thus the political situation is propitious for the propaganda and agitation of our Party.

These are the circumstances under which the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Belgium was held at the beginning of September.

The Party Congress

In its political report the Executive Committee of the Party, after an analysis of the political and economic situation of the country, submitted the entire activity of the Party to a fair and thorough searching self-criticism, exposing its weaknesses and errors, its inadequate political leadership in the face of everyday tasks and the growing influence of the Party, the absence of any or-

ganisation capable of establishing contact between sympathisers and Communist electors and the Party, the perilous disproportion between the numerical strength of the Party and its influence on the masses and the failure to utilise all the forces of the Party for political and trade union activity.

Apart from these serious questions of organisation, on which the development of the Party depends, the Congress had to elucidate various important questions, first and foremost that of trade union tactics—its relations with the "Unité" group, its attitude towards expulsions, towards the "Knights of Labour" ("Chevaliers du Travail") and its attitude to Fascism and to the anti-Fascist defence corps of the P.O.B., its tactics in the national question with regard to the Flemish movement, and its attitude towards the "Left Wing" of the P.O.B., etc.

Did the Congress give a clear answer to these questions, and clear directions to the Party? Did it approach these tasks in a concrete and practical manner?

The answer must be an emphatic "No!"

In spite of the fact that the political report pointed out the weaknesses of the Party and that the letter addressed by the Presidium to the International very forcibly indicated which problems ought to be the centres of attention at the Congress, two days were spent in petty criticisms of a purely negative character without any effort being made to find practical solutions for the tasks before the Party.

Nothing Done!

The political report with its excellent self-criticism was adopted, but not a single measure was taken to remedy the errors! The trade union report was not even discussed; organisational questions, so important in the present situation, were postponed until a later conference. The balance-sheet of this Congress is decidedly unsatisfactory.

Moreover a number of speakers proved that sectarianism was not dead in the Party. The only remedy advocated by them was to educate the 800 members of the Party; a very necessary task at any time, but one which at the present juncture is certainly not the most essential task, not the task on which all the efforts and all the work of the Party should be concentrated.

While the result of the municipal elections is another important victory for the Party, it at the same time points to the risk the Party is running if the questions raised at the Congress, and left unsolved by it are not tackled energetically and in a practical manner without further delay. The Party has 70,000 followers who voted for it in 64 constituencies. These electors are workers disillusioned with the Social Democrats, and influenced by our widespread and efficient agitation. But the Party does not know who these thousands of sympathisers are!

Our campaigns have detached them from the formidable Social Democratic tradition, but only one per cent. of them are organised in our Party; 10 per cent. are occasional readers of our press; the Party has no contact whatever with the other 90 per cent. It does not know where to find them except at election time, and cannot therefore utilise them for its mass movements, its trade union work, and its campaigns for the capture of new and important sections of the working class.

If for demagogic purposes the P.O.B. were to come out again in the rôle of the Opposition in Parliament,

The Communist Party of Belgium—contd.

the masses, over which we have no control whatever and with which we have no organic links, will probably go back to the Social Democrats. During the election campaign Vandervelde made it perfectly clear that the P.O.B. did not intend to uphold the coalition Government after the franc had been stabilised, and this is being hurriedly put through. The result of these municipal elections will no doubt finally convince the reformist leaders that it is essential for them to be in opposition unless they want to give up their influence over the masses to Communism.

Recruits Needed

Therefore we must be prepared for a change of front by the P.O.B. and for a big demagogic campaign when it dissociates itself from the coalition Government after the stabilisation of the franc. What will then be left of our whole agitation, if the Communist Party does not consolidate the breach which it has just made in the stronghold of the Social Democrats, if it does not organise its influence over the electors?

The essential task to-day is not the education of the 800 members of the Communist Party, it is rather a big recruiting campaign to secure new members for the Party, a big effort to double and treble the number of subscribers and readers of the "Drapeau Rouge" by improving it and converting it into a real daily organ of the workers.

We are aware that the organisational tradition of the Belgian proletariat is not favourable to individual recruitment. The workers are affiliated to the P.O.B. through the collective affiliation of their trade union, their cooperative, or their mutual aid society. But to make this an argument against an effort to recruit and organise new members is to lull to sleep the activity of the Party, to shield the relics of sectarianism and the slackness of the apparatus of the Party. Agitation and propaganda become a peril whenever their success is not followed by efforts to carry on methodical organisation.

What the Party Wants

On the other hand it goes without saying that although the tradition of collective organisation that exists in the P.O.B. is an obstacle to individual recruiting, it is certainly not an obstacle to the distribution of Party publications. The Party must try to find means to get in contact with the masses, which are meeting it half way. This very important question, which the Congress left unsolved, is becoming every day more important and more imperative; it gives rise to a series of other questions just as urgent—the need for a real collective leadership of the Party, making possible a more methodical and consistent political activity, for a complete reconstruction of the inadequate organisational apparatus and the formation of an organisational commission or section, for the improvement of the editorial part of the Party's newspaper and closer contact between it and the Party lead, for close collaboration between agitational and organisational activities, for the utilisation of all forces of the Party and the enlistment of new members for political and trade union work, and finally the need for a solution of our trade union questions and of the question of how to use Communist electors in trade union work.

BOOK



REVIEWS

Heroes - Sentimentalised

HEROES OF THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION, by Dr. Max Adler. The Laub Publishing House, Berlin, 1926; 53 pages.

THE Austrian Social-Democrats have made quite a reputation for themselves for being able to conceal their Menshevism, in a very refined manner, behind learned and revolutionary phraseology. Only quite recently the Austrian Party programme has been quoted as a model for such a policy of deceit. The book under discussion is a worthy illustration of these methods, the only difference being that in this book sentimentality is given full play, disguising the deceit practised against the masses even better than scientific quotations from Marx.

Adler writes a book full of extreme pathos, admiration and veneration for the heroes of the Social Revolution, i.e., for Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg. This constellation alone is an astounding feat on the part of a member of the Second International! However, with the right instinct of a radical Menshevik, he has realised that by means of the old methods of disparagement and slander of these three great dead nothing can be achieved among the masses. Neither would a conspiracy of silence prevent the penetration of the names of these three revolutionaries into the toiling masses. Therefore, the most refined methods seemed "de rigueur" with respect to them. The question if the author, whilst deceiving the masses, also deceives himself, is of no interest whatever to us here.

To Adler the supreme importance of these three revolutionaries is their wholehearted devotion to the cause of the liberation of the workers. Adler cannot find words enough to emphasise and praise this devotion. But together with this devotion Adler sees the reason for the enormous importance of these three revolutionaries in their loyalty to revolutionary Marxism, in their struggle against the ever-growing reformism and Chauvinism of the Second International and the Amsterdam trade unions.

He even goes much further, he exalts the Russian revolution carried out under Lenin's leadership, not only as one of the most prominent events in the history of Russia, but also as of enormous importance to the liberation of the workers of the world.

He emphasises the connection between this so greatly praised October revolution and the entire previous activity of Lenin, from his initial appearance in the Labour movement up to Zimmerwald and his anti-war activity. In his approval he even goes to the length of saying that there are no fundamental divergencies of

Heroes—Sentimentalised—continued

opinion between him and the Bolsheviks with respect to the question of dictatorship and Red Terror.

But we soon recover from our astonishment: the cloven foot shows itself. After paying in this manner tribute to the masses' veneration for Lenin, it is, of course, essential to prevent the political effect of this veneration. Naturally, Lenin is not without faults and the most serious mistake committed by Lenin, this—in Adler's opinion also—most prominent leader of the international Labour movement, was the establishment of the Third International, the disruption of the workers into two big separate camps. Thereby Adler contradicts everything he said before. He does not mention that the reformism and Chauvinism of his own Party comrades, against which he rails, accelerated the disruption of the workers, and that the Third International was only the organisational and political expression of this fact. By ignoring this fact Adler shows that his admiration for Lenin's work up to the establishment of the Third International is only lip-service.

Whose Fault?

Lenin's entire activity, from the beginning of his political career to the October Revolution via Zimmerwald, led inevitably to the establishment of the Third International. To Adler its establishment was an error, an over-estimation of the revolutionary forces of Europe.

But what are the causes of the weakening of these revolutionary forces? Are they not the murderous deeds perpetrated by the Second International against the Russian revolutionary workers, and also against the German workers, after the manner of Noske and of the Mensheviks who went over to the White Guard camp? Are they not the treachery of those with whom Adler is in close alliance?

The article on Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg is written in the same vein. Extravagant admiration for these two great revolutionaries, for their

struggle against opportunism and for Social Revolution. The whole gamut of feelings is brought into play with respect to their death. He, of course, advisedly keeps silent as to the identity of the assassins and ascribes to themselves responsibility for their death. They, too, are victims of the White bands organised by Noske. Their greatest error is somewhat similar to that of Lenin: the premature armed struggle which, according to Adler, became a struggle against the proletariat (wasn't it rather against the bourgeoisie?) because the masses were not yet ripe.

They met with their undoing because of the disruption of the workers into two contending camps. But as a consolation to his readers, he declares that this great error of the two revolutionaries has not detracted from their memory and is not an obstacle to their further influence on the development of the idea of Social Revolution.

Opponent of the Revolution

Adler could not say anything against the Russian revolution, since it has been accomplished and continues to exist, but he shows in what he has written about Liebknecht and Luxemburg that he only recognises the Russian revolution on the strength of its actual existence; otherwise he is an opponent of the revolution itself. For what he reproaches Liebknecht and Luxemburg with is to have undertaken the struggle for the accomplishment of the revolution, for the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship. The fact that such a struggle must be necessarily also a struggle against Noske, Ebert, Scheidemann and—Max Adler, made him at the time an opponent of the struggle, and must naturally make him always an opponent of the proletarian dictatorship.

This work is a document of an even worse and more lying character than the new Austrian Party programme, for under the cloak of supreme veneration for the greatest champions of the proletarian revolution it endeavours to do counter-revolutionary work.

R. SONTER.

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An Angel's Dilemma

MUST BRITAIN TRAVEL THE MOSCOW ROAD? By
NORMAN ANGELL. (Noel Douglas. 5s.)

HERE is a pretty kettle of fish! Another angel has fallen from heaven, and struck a bad patch. It is a real angel too, of thorough petty-bourgeois brand, flapping broken Liberal wings on behalf of the Labour Party.

It is not the first fall this poor angel has had. Just before the war in 1914 he was a literary musician, peddling a song called "The Great Illusion." It was a very charming song—"war would not pay," and lo, the capitalists had another opinion and the war came. And the song ceased. We heard no more of the singer for a long time, until one fine morning in 1926 he was cast out from the heaven of contemplation and struck Britain—"on the Moscow Road." It hurt him very much and some kind publisher threw Trotsky's book "Where is Britain Going?" at him, and, angel though he be, he resented it, and screamed with a loud voice—"Must Britain Travel the Moscow Road?" Then he tried to answer the question by writing a book.

Mr. MacDonald reviewed the book, Mr. J. L. Garvin also reviewed the book. In short, it got a boosting in the bourgeois press, and it was regarded as the Labour Party's "crushing" reply to the Communists. And what does it say? First, "What is ignored is the fact that the direction of tendency of the Labour movement is determined much less by its own leaders, agitators and policies than by its opponents—Conservative leaders, Conservative public, class conscious employers—and *their* policies and the conditions which these latter policies produce." (p. 18.) "Imagine, in other words (and the thing does not require a great imaginative flight) that the absence of an Opposition Party capable

of putting a government into power causes the Conservative Government to become increasingly unbending, increasingly dominated by the Diehard element, increasingly subject to such follies as the prosecution of Communist journalists, in just the time and circumstances when such a step would revive the Communist influence which had become negligible; the creation of Fascisti bodies at a time when the development of Fascisti means inevitably a counter-balancing increase of revolutionary sentiment. In other words, imagine the probable." (p. 20.)

But there is another alternative or possibility—"There is something else that must be shown too, namely, that those to whom the present system gives power and authority hold themselves ready to accept any change which would indubitably improve the lot of the people as a whole." (p. 28.)

Having stated these two "possibilities," the probable, and what must be shown to the workers as a possible means of preventing revolution, does this angelic friend of "peace" proceed to at once prove that the capitalist classes are prepared and are "willing to accept any change which would indubitably improve the lot of the people as a whole"? Not at all. He passes on to tell us on the one hand that the position of Britain is quite all right. He says that there isn't a problem before British capitalism, that the decline in Britain's position in the world has been over-emphasised. On the other hand he proceeds to give everybody a lecture on the virtues of the high standard of living. He tells us that a "high standard of living is indispensable to the type of work, the kind of activity, high productivity demands."

How Very Strange!

Strange that the British bourgeoisie have not learned all about this! Surely they knew of the existence of Mr. Ford and the virtues of American capitalism before this dear middle-class angel introduced him! What strange creature can have persuaded them to pursue exactly the opposite policy? Why on earth did they not listen to the heavenly message long ago and refrain from forcing a General Strike and the six months' stoppage of the mining industry by demanding lower wages, etc.? He does not say. He simply propagates Fordism, thinking that he has propounded something with which the British capitalists were not yet acquainted.

As a matter of fact after making all this agitation about the virtues of America he says "It is easy enough to indicate measures which would put the economic organisation of the world upon a more stable foundation But all thorough-going far-reaching and really effective measures immediately encounter the difficulty that there is not the remotest chance of their being accepted and worked by the nations moved by the public opinion which we know"

Does he then proceed to analyse the situation and indicate what must be done? Well, let us see. He tells us that we should return to the policy of the war period which, be it observed, was Socialism. He says: "When it was proposed to continue for the purposes of peace the self-same methods to which we had resorted so

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An Angel's Dilemma—contd.

readily during the war we suddenly discovered it was Socialism, and then proceeded not only to destroy the national organisations of war time but to close our minds to any real consideration of how far the war method could be adapted to the peace need." (p. 68.) Then completely exasperated with the futility of his sermons he declares that if the ruling classes are not ready to sacrifice as much now as in the time of war "to be just as sincere in doing our bit and trying honestly everything that promises to be an effective remedy, if they cannot say that in their hearts, then the revolution may well be around the corner."

Having come to this exasperating conclusion he decides to put on a new record, and proceeds to restate the case for civil war as per Trotsky's book with a view (one would expect) to slaughtering it, especially in regard to its application to Britain. But we expect too much. Instead of scientifically analysing the social conditions of Britain and proving his case that British capitalism can recover by means of higher wages, shorter hours and the general application of Fordism, he attempts to show that there has been no revolution in Russia, or at least that what there is left of it has almost vanished, thus proving the falsity of Trotsky's case!

Why are They Scared?

He says there is no proletarian dictatorship in Russia, that private capitalism is going on fine and that therefore the whole argument of Trotsky's book which is devoted to showing the inevitability of civil war in Britain goes by the board.

He quotes Farbman, the Menshevik correspondent of the Tory journal, "The Observer" and quite a number of counter-revolutionary authorities to prove that the Russian revolution is finished, and that Bolshevism has gone to the devil. So much so that we wonder why on earth the capitalist governments of the world are so frightfully scared of Moscow, and why he himself is so terribly alarmed about the "Moscow road." But this part of his argument there is no need for us to answer, only the utterly stupid would advance it.

We look again at the book to see exactly what he has got to offer the workers of Britain in the present situation and this is what we find: "Well, it is entirely within the power of Labour without any bloody revolution or storming of barricades, with the means already in their hands if they care to use them, to capture this citadel. A tiny act of daily discipline on the part of each worker—the decision to take one paper instead of another, the Labour Daily first as he goes to work in the morning—would transfer the most of this vast power, these tremendous resources, from the side of capital to the side of Labour"

Read the "Daily Herald"! The alternative to revolution! The alternative to the Moscow Road! Guarantees the security of capitalism from the Bolshevik Invasion! Edited and managed by renegade Communists! Ha! Ha! Ha!

J. T. MURPHY.

The Peasants' Revolt

THE AGRARIAN REVOLUTION IN EUROPE. A collection of Essays, edited by Prof. M. SEHRING. Russian Edition, 292 pp. State Publishing House, Moscow. Price 2 roubles.

THIS compendium contains a valuable collection of facts, which are, however, for the most part prepared and presented in a false light. In order to aid the reader to know where he is, the State Publishing House has supplied a good introduction.

The book contains the following sections: (1) Agrarian conditions prior to the world war; (2) the Agrarian Revolution in Roumania, Greece, Yugo-Slavia, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Finland, Latvia, Esthonia, Poland and Lithuania.

In his preface, Professor Sehring gives his views on the trend of development and significance of agrarian reform. But in explaining agrarian reform he does not start from the relationships between the farmers and landowners, but from a consideration of communal and family life; only later does he deal with the relations between "the ruling class and the masses of the people."

Professor Sehring discovers the roots of the agrarian revolution in a type of agrarian society peculiar to the Slavs, with their communes and their patriarchal families, in which the custom prevails of actually dividing up inheritances. "A greedy chase after land, high land prices and rents are everywhere concomitants of a small peasantry and of the custom of splitting up the land. In the greater part of Eastern and Central Europe the land-hunger has led to an identical mass sentiment—to the mood which led the Russian peasantry to fling themselves upon the property of the landlords." (p. 5.)

This custom of constantly dividing up land is contrasted by Professor Sehring with the "Germanic type" of agrarian relations characterised by individual ownership and only one heir inheriting the land. These are the fundamentals of "all the good in social culture and social progress."

As a representative of bourgeois Junker reaction, Professor Sehring veils and distorts the real essence of the agrarian conditions in various countries, as well as the relations between peasants and landlords. Agrarian legislation is conceived by Professor Sehring only as a "tool in the national struggle."

As far as the "social and economic significance of agrarian legislation" is concerned, Professor Sehring supports big capitalist-landlord ownership, the ending of which he considers the decline of agriculture. An opponent of agrarian reform, Professor Sehring looks on it with extreme scepticism. "Nowhere," he writes, "has it succeeded in satisfying the land-hunger of the small peasants, even in the remotest degree. The agrarian question remains unsolved. The struggle for land has hardly abated, and with increasing population it will flame up again, just as before the reform."

This claim of Professor Sehring's is in fact, the only correct one in the book. In its "Gotterdammerung" days the bourgeoisie is incapable of carrying out even purely bourgeois reforms.

Turning to the description of the "agrarian reforms" in the various countries, we see that they have taken place in countries containing relics of feudalism, and under the pressure of a revolutionary-minded peasantry. In so far as these reforms were undertaken by the ruling

The Peasants' Revolt—continued

class itself for self-preservation, they have not entirely managed to remove even these feudal relics. Bourgeois governments have always seized the first possible opportunity to sabotage the execution of the agrarian reforms, and to take back their "concessions." Big landlordism has only been partially wiped out, yet gigantic sums have been extorted from the peasant masses for compensation, while a new capitalist agriculture has been created in the place of the old feudal landownership. But of this extremely little is to be found in the various essays.

Reforms—But no Peace

The authors in most cases represent the course and the significance of the agrarian reforms wrongly. Thus the writer dealing with land reform in Greece veils the fact that until recently the agrarian reforms have been accompanied by independent armed seizure of the land! As regards Yugo-Slavia, the writer thinks that "the failure of the colonisation of the Woiwodin district is to be blamed on the colonists themselves." The author of the section on Czecho-Slovakia devotes not a word to the plundering of the peasants of Carpatho-Russia and Slovakia by the Czech capitalists and agrarians, who distributed the large estates of these districts not to the native peasants, but to Czech "colonists." The author of the section on the agrarian question in Finland passes over in silence the measures of the workers' government, etc., etc.

Although the authors of this compendium present the course and significance of agrarian reform inaccurately throughout, nevertheless the material in this work shows how grave is the error of anyone who looks to agrarian reform as a means of pacifying the countryside, and damming up the revolutionary mood of the peasantry. The final result of the "reforms" has been not to weaken class antagonisms; they are actually being sharpened. Hence the inability, the helplessness of the bourgeoisie. They cannot solve the agrarian question. This makes possible a further strengthening of the revolutionary peasants' movement.

E. BOSCHKOVITSCH.

Persia—a British Colony.

THE ECONOMIC POSITION OF PERSIA. By KHAN FATCH, London, 1926. 102pp.

THOSE interested in the East, and especially in the question of the Middle East, will find in this book valuable material shedding light on the economics of present-day Persia. Some of the figures are brought up to 1924. But the information given as to the economic situation of Persia, and its material resources, does not characterise modern Persia quite accurately. During the last two years important changes have taken place in Persian agriculture: landed property has been gathered rapidly into the hands of the Persian merchants. At the same time the primitive forms of cultivation are rapidly giving way to new methods and modern technique.

Furthermore, an important increase in the number of factories (matches, textiles, silk weaving, etc.), employing more than a hundred workers is to be noted in the towns.

These phenomena of the last two years have scarcely been noticed in the press. In the book under review, published in 1926, there is not a single word about the growth of industrial enterprise in Persia, or about the transition to up-to-date methods of farming in the Persian country-

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side. There is also no mention of the forms of agriculture, the density of the peasantry, the land shortage, or of the feudal nature of peasant labour, and the enslaving conditions of lease prevalent in the country districts. The unfortunate Persian small farmers are held in an iron grip by the conditions on which they rent their farms.

The question of oil is only treated superficially and one-sidedly, in an extremely Anglophile spirit.

The question of railway building, which the Persian Government is now beginning, is also not touched upon at all by the author. The projected railway system, however, marks the commencement of a new era in Persian economics. Up till now Persia has been practically without railways, if we leave out of account the narrow gauge Disulfz-Tabriz line, 250 kilometres long.

Despite these defects, the book will help readers to approach for the first time the Middle Eastern countries, and to get an idea of the main features in the economic situation of this country enslaved by British capital. P.K.

