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The New Phase in Britain and the Communist Party

R. Palme Dutt

(Written before the resolution of the Comintern on the British Question was passed.)

THE present situation in Britain and the British Labour movement raises problems of policy calling for careful consideration by the whole International.

The general character of the international situation, which is acutely reflected in Britain, is marked by the development of sharpening issues and contradictions within the partial stabilisation of capitalism (which may take the form, in the coming period, both of a new left bloc democratic-pacifist era, and of a nearer approach to war, both alike evidence of growing instability), by the re-awakening and advance of the working class, despite past defeats and combined capitalist and reformist repression, to new and growing struggles in 1928, and by the consolidation of the reformist bureaucracy to a policy of complete alliance with capitalism and throttling of the working class. This situation raises the general necessity of the strengthening and intensifying of the Communist Party line, sharpening of the fight against social-democracy, and development of the united front from below, in order to be ready to lead in the coming struggles.

In Britain this general situation and task takes on a special character and raises special problems because of the peculiar character of the Labour Party, which is at once the instrument of the reformist bureaucracy moving more and more completely to the right, and still holds the mass of the workers in its grip by its control of the mass organisations of the trade unions. How at once to maintain contact with the masses, and to realise the new and sharpened leadership required by the new period and the leftward movement of the workers, is the problem of the British Communist Party.

This problem takes on a specially urgent character with the approach of the General Election, which makes necessary the clear laying down of the Communist Party line and of its relation to the Labour Party. The

General Election, however, only typifies the general issue in front for the coming period, which is raised no less urgently by the approach of a new wave of sharpening issues and mass struggles in Britain, and above all, by the near approach of the war issue.

I. THE NEW PHASE OF THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT*

The new phase which the British Labour movement is now going through, a phase of sharpening issues between revolutionaries and reformists, is the sequel to the victory of the bourgeoisie over the General Strike and the miners, their successful intervention in China and break with the Soviet Union, and their successful imposition of the Trade Union Act to bind and consolidate their control over the working class before the revolutionary forces grew stronger. The period since the General Strike up to the present thus bears on the surface the character of a whole series of victories of the bourgeoisie and depression of the working-class movement; it is only below the surface that may be discerned the growing contradictions and insoluble problems of British bourgeois policy on the one hand, and on the other the growing unrest in the working class.

Corresponding to this process of apparent victory of the bourgeoisie all along the line, the reformist bureaucracy in the Labour Party and trade unions has come out into the open to proclaim officially a policy of

* The character of the new phase and the general situation, giving the detailed grounds for what can be presented in this article only in summary outline, are reviewed with greater fullness in the present writer's "Notes of the Month" in the "Labour Monthly" for December, 1927, "The New Course," and for January, 1928, "The New Phase of the Labour Party and Our Tasks." References should be made to these for a fuller statement.

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“Coalition with Capitalism” and to smash once and for all the growing revolutionary forces by every means. Dropping the old pretence of a peculiar “British” type of movement, based on freedom of opinion, tolerance and all-inclusive unity, they have been compelled by events to range themselves fully and complete with Continental social-democracy and Amsterdam. The pseudo-left phase of 1925-26—which was in any case only a façade on the part of the bureaucracy, put up in order to keep within their control the left wave of the masses—has been finally and easily liquidated. The entire reformist leadership, right and so-called “left” alike, has now come out equally on an unreserved policy of coalition with capitalism: the trade unions at Edinburgh and after by their direct offer of class-co-operation with the employers, which is now being realised in the Mond-General Council negotiations for a formal alliance; the Labour Party at Blackpool by the preparation of a non-socialist programme for a coalition government, either open or veiled, with the Liberals in the near future, which will be realised in the universally expected Liberal-Labour bloc of the coming period.

In conformity with this policy of coalition, and parallel to the bourgeois campaign of repression, there has been a tightening of the right-wing machinery of discipline in the Labour movement; a growing series of splits, expulsions and reconstructions of leading local sections of the Labour Party, and a beginning of the extension of expulsions to the trade unions.

In the face of this extreme of reaction, the leftward move of the workers, developing continuously in the past five years, has not been checked; on the contrary, all signs show that it is developing more deeply and with increasing power. The defection of the pseudo-left leaders, so far from shattering, has helped to strengthen and clear the leftward movement. The cleavage between the reformist bureaucracy and the mass of the workers is deeper than ever before. Signals such as the Scottish Miners’ Federation results give some indication of the processes at work. The new intensity and ferocity of the capitalist and reformist repression is itself evidence of the strength of the forces it is intended to repress.

At the same time, 1928 is opening up new struggles. A new wave of wage attacks has already begun. The approach of the General Election and the discredit of the Baldwin Government are awakening intensified political interest. The menace of war is beginning to be felt. The tempo of the class struggle and of the political situation is again rising.

This situation, of approaching new struggles, of consolidation of the reformist bureaucracy on the one hand, and of leftward movement of the masses on the other, raises urgent problems of the line of the Communist Party in the period in front of it.

In proportion as the Labour Party loses its old loose federal all-inclusive nominally “free” character, and hardens and rigidifies more and more into a disciplined machine of systematic social-imperialist politics and corruption, drawing closer in type to the continental social-democratic parties; in proportion as the pseudo-left reformist leaders become exposed by the pace of events and drawn back into line by the tightening right-

wing discipline; in proportion as the leftward move of the workers seeks after new leadership, finds the pseudo-left leaders fail them, and finds the avenues of expression more and more closed within the new limited Labour Party; in the same proportion the strongest possible independent political leadership of the Communist Party becomes of ever more essential importance to save the working class from being dragged as a body in the wake of reactionary imperialist politics, to raise ever more clearly the banner of the only possible alternative leadership to the Labour Party reactionaries, and so to carry the movement a stage forward in place of the stagnation and decay threatened by the reformist machine discipline.

But the realisation of this independent political leadership raises the question under present conditions of a new stage in the Party line. Up to the present, our Party, while maintaining criticism of the reformist leadership both within the Labour Party and in general agitation and propaganda, has refrained from directly fighting this leadership in the political field, has left them a free field at elections and advocated support, has endeavoured to secure the adoption of Communists as Labour candidates, and in the demand for affiliation has expressed its readiness to accept the constitution and discipline of the Labour Party. This policy was based on the conditions of the early stage of the Party, on the stage of the development of the mass movement eight years ago, and on the conditions of the Labour Party as it was then.

The question now arises whether the time has not come to advance to a new stage, a stage of direct and open fight against the reformist leadership of the Labour Party, while continuing to the maximum extent the policy of the united front from below with the workers in the Labour Party.

This question is made immediate by the General Election. The Labour Party will be running candidates in practically every constituency of importance, and in every constituency where the working-class vote is a serious factor. Unless the Communist Party is prepared to fight official Labour candidates it will for practical purposes not be able to fight at all, and will not be a direct factor in the election. On the other hand, the running of Communist candidates against official Labour candidates will undoubtedly mean in practically every case (since the British electoral system does not permit of alternative votes, second ballots or the like) that the division of the working-class vote will assist the open capitalist (Liberal or Conservative) candidates. Hitherto the Party has avoided such contests, with rare exceptions, and pursued the policy of critical support to the Labour Party in elections, in accordance with Lenin’s advice in 1920. A reversal or revision of this policy (actually a carrying forward of Lenin’s policy, in accordance with his own principles, to a new stage) needs to be clearly grounded on the development of events since then and on the present situation, and raises important issues which need to be clearly faced.

The question is sometimes discussed as simply a question of election candidatures and the necessity of fighting the reformist candidates of the Labour Party. Such an issue, if it could be taken in isolation, would be extremely simple. But any question of candidatures involving opposition to official Labour Party candidates

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(whether in more or less numbers, whether against more or less reactionary "right" or "left" Labour candidates, makes no difference to the issue in principle of fighting the Labour Party's candidates) necessarily raises the whole question of the Labour Party and the Communist Party's relation to the Labour Party. A whole series of issues and problems is raised on which discussion is needed, in relation to which the election decision needs to be taken, and on which the correct Party line needs to be carefully worked out, in order that a clear and consistent policy as a whole for the new stage may be reached.

For the purpose of the present article it will be useful to consider the question under the following heads: (a) the reasons for our policy towards the Labour Party in 1920; (b) the transformation of the situation between 1920 and 1928; (c) the significance of the MacDonald Labour Government and of the General Strike; (d) the leftward movement of the workers; (e) the transformation of the Labour Party; (f) the reasons for a new stage of policy; (g) difficulties in the way of a new stage of policy and their meeting.

2. THE REASONS FOR OUR POLICY TOWARDS THE LABOUR PARTY IN 1920

The Communist Party of Great Britain was formed in 1920 out of a combination of previous smaller groupings and organisations of the revolutionary left in the working-class movement. It was a young, very small Party (with a very much smaller membership even than to-day, with a limited sectarian type of political experience, and with no traditions of systematic work in the working-class organisations) confronted with a very large, long-established and deeply-entrenched reformist-controlled organisation in the shape of the Labour Party.

The first task was, therefore, to throw this young and small party into the midst of the larger movement, there to fight the reformist bureaucracy in this wider field, break down the old sectarian traditions and learn the conditions of mass work.

The mass movement had still to go through the stage of the complete exposure of the Labour Party social-traitors by the formation of a "Labour Government," *i.e.*, a government composed of these leaders. Only this direct experience could expose their true character. The task of the Communist Party was, not to hold itself aloof from the masses during this period and ignore the necessary stage of the "Labour Government," but from inside the movement to conduct the work of exposure of the reformist traitors at every point, to assist the development and clearing of issues, and so only by the complete exposure of the reformist traitors and proof of the ability of leadership of the Party in the actual struggle to win the mass of the workers to its own independent leadership.

The governing factor of Lenin's treatment of the question in 1920 was that the Labour Party had not yet reached the stage of the formation of a government, that the majority of the workers still supported the Labour Party social-traitors, and that the workers must go through the experience of this exposure in order to advance beyond it. He wrote:

"Since the majority of the workers in Britain

still support the British Scheidemanns and Kerenskys, since they have not yet experienced a Government composed of such men, an experience necessary in Russia and Germany before there was an exodus of the masses towards Communism, it follows without any doubt that the British Communists must participate in Parliament. They must from within Parliament help the workers to see in practice the results of the Henderson and Snowden Government, they must help the Hendersons and Snowdens to vanquish Lloyd George and Churchill united."

In these circumstances, Lenin explained, our Party, which lacks access to the masses, can gain access by advocating to vote for Henderson, which will be popular, and so gain the opportunity to explain

"That I am prepared to support Henderson by my vote in just the same way as a rope supports the man who has hanged himself. And, as the Hendersons draw nearer to the formation of their own Government, it will be proved that I am right, it will draw the masses to my side, and will facilitate the political death of the Hendersons and Snowdens, as happened in the case of their co-thinkers in Russia and in Germany."

On this basis Lenin advocated electoral support, combined with criticism, of the Labour Party; the proposal of an electoral bloc; and, in the event of refusal, the avoidance of contests likely to injure a Labourite for the benefit of a Liberal.

It will be seen that Lenin is speaking throughout of the stage *prior* to the formation of a Labour Government—"as the Hendersons draw nearer to the formation of their own Government." Our purpose in assisting, together with the criticism, up to this point is in order that the exposure may take place. But this does not mean that our assistance should continue after the exposure has taken place. On the contrary, our task, then, becomes to utilise and drive home the exposure to the full (which at first is only half understood by the workers) in order to win over the majority of the workers; and for this purpose we need to intensify our fight and raise clearly our independent leadership.*

A further factor making possible the conducting

* The suggestion has been made that Lenin's reference to the necessity of winning the majority of the workers from the Scheidemanns and Kerenskys implies that the Party must abstain from raising its independent fight for the leadership of the workers until it already has the majority of the workers behind it, *i.e.*, until not only the exposure has taken place, but the majority of the workers are convinced of the exposure. This suggestion has only to be made for its absurdity to be self-evident. The independent fight for leadership of the workers after the exposure, and on the basis of the exposure, of the reformist leaders, is as essential a stage of the process of winning the majority of the workers as the original assisting in leading up to the exposure. Lenin declared very clearly that the majority of the working class (or of the politically conscious workers) is essential for the revolution but he did not declare that the majority of the working class is necessary before the Communist Party can take up its direct fight against social-democracy. This is made abundantly clear, if it were necessary, by the reference to Germany as being past the stage in question, although at the time he wrote the Social-Democratic Party still held the majority of the working class.

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from within the Labour Party our task of exposing the reformist leadership lay in the peculiar character of the Labour Party as a federal bloc of working-class organisations, dominated by reformists, but leaving extreme freedom to its constituent bodies and members. This made possible agitation and propaganda by Communists as individual members, trade union delegates and even official Parliamentary candidates within the Labour Party, and also made possible the demand for affiliation by the Communist Party as a whole to the Labour Party, which was approved by the Second International Congress in 1920. At the time of the formation of the Communist Party the British Socialist Party—which was one of the bodies going to form it—was already affiliated to the Labour Party, and at the same time affiliated to the Communist International and conducting without interference advocacy of proletarian dictatorship and criticism of the social-traitors at the head of the Labour Party. On this unique character of the Labour Party, as governing the possibility of demand for affiliation, Lenin said at the Second Congress :

“The Labour Party is a peculiar organisation having no parallel in any other country; it comprises from six to seven million organised workers of all kinds of unions. Political convictions are not inquired into.

“Is it possible for a Communist Party to join another political party which still belongs to the Second International? We must remember that conditions in the British Labour Party are very peculiar; this is a very unusual party, it is not a party in the ordinary sense of the word; it consists of the members of all trade union organisations. It grants sufficient liberty to all political parties which affiliate to it. . . . A party belonging to the Labour Party is not only in a position to criticise sharply, but also to declare openly, whilst giving names, that the old leaders are social-traitors. These are very peculiar conditions; a party organises enormous masses of workers, as if it were a political party, and at the same time is compelled to grant them full liberty. . . . Under these circumstances it would be wrong tactics not to join the Party.”

Thus it will be seen that it was “under these circumstances,” *i.e.*, of “full liberty” of the workers within the Labour Party—that Lenin found the affiliation policy correct. The demand for affiliation has consistently been rejected; and the “full liberty” of members, delegates or candidates in the Labour Party no longer obtains.

Finally, a further document of the same period, the International Executive’s “Reply to the I.L.P.,” written in the summer of 1920, definitely looks forward to a future stage in which the Labour Party may have become transformed by the opportunist leaders into a “real party with local organisations and a programme” and the policy of the Communist Party towards the Labour Party will then have to be completely reversed :

“At the present moment there is a tendency of the opportunist leaders to make the Labour Party a real Party with local organisations and a

programme. They aim to create a large opportunist party which is to retard the revolutionary development of the masses. Were this tendency to succeed the Labour Party would never afford the socialist organisations which form part of it the right to an individual Communist policy, nor to the propagation of the revolutionary struggle. It would bind their freedom of action hand and foot. It is thus evident that no kind of organisation seeking to carry out a Communist policy could possibly belong to the Labour Party. *It would then become necessary after a most energetic struggle against this tendency to leave the Labour Party and to endeavour to keep in touch with the working masses by means of increasing the Communist activity in the trade unions, by detaching these trade unions from the Labour opportunist parties to go over directly to Communism.*”

Here not only is a complete reversal of policy envisaged, but a direct attempt to detach the trade union from the Labour Party and win them over to the direct support of Communism.

From this survey of the policy laid down towards the Labour Party in 1920 it will be seen :

- (1) That the policy was expressly prescribed for the period prior to a Labour Government.
- (2) That the policy was conditional on the continuance of the “full liberty” of the workers in the Labour Party.
- (3) That the possibility of a future complete reversal of the policy was kept in mind, in the event of the establishment of opportunist discipline in the Labour Party, in which case it would become necessary to attempt to detach the trade unions from the Labour Party.

3. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SITUATION BETWEEN 1920 AND 1928

Between 1920 and 1928 a whole process of development has transformed the situation. This can be seen most rapidly from a survey of the position as regards the factors governing the situation in 1920.

First, the Communist Party has won a definite measure of mass support, on the basis of a series of years’ systematic work in the mass organisations of the working class and participation in every aspect of the daily struggle. Its press has a steady circulation of over 50,000; through the Minority Movement it is able to influence a million trade unionists. Its problem now turns on the best means to organise this growing mass influence; and this problem will be found to turn on the necessity to advance from a secondary position to independent leadership. The primary task is no longer how to find a line of contact for the Communist Party with the masses, but how to strengthen its political leadership.

Second, the Labour Party has now advanced beyond the stage of the formation of a government, and the character of its leaders in office has been fully exposed. The primary task is now no longer to assist their advance to office in order that they may expose themselves, but to overthrow them on the basis of the exposure that has already taken place and is daily continuing.

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Third, the "full liberty" of the workers in the Labour Party has disappeared. The Labour Party has been transformed by its opportunist leadership into a limited party with doctrinal discipline over individual members, local and national officials, local sections and electoral candidates; and with the beginnings of restrictions over trade union delegates, which are likely to be fully enforced in the near future. The Communist Party is thus compelled in any case, while utilising to the last every possible avenue of expression in the Labour Party, to find new lines of work.

But the measure of transformation of the situation is greater than can be fully summed up in a series of separate points. For the basic situation in Britain has changed between 1920 and 1928. *Between 1920 and 1928 has taken place the whole British post-war capitalist decline and capitalist offensive, leading to the growing revolutionisation of the working class.* This is the basic fact, of which the Labour Government of 1924 and the General Strike of 1926 are only expressions, leading to the necessity of the new stage of policy and the intensification of the fight.

1920, when Lenin wrote, was the last point of the post-war boom.

1928 sees the completion of seven years of intensified struggle, wage attacks, unemployment, worsened conditions, deeper and deeper struggle of the whole power and organisation of the working class and capitalist class and reformist treachery on a scale never before exemplified.

In the spring of 1920, when Lenin wrote, the British working class was on the crest of the wave. The working-class organisations were expanding and at their highest point; the level of wages reached its highest point; the attack on railway wages the previous autumn had been repulsed; in August came the Council of Action. The Labour Party was sweeping forward, with a loudly advertised programme of a "New Social Order," and was expected shortly to reach the formation of a government. It was with this type of perspective in view (as he himself made clear in his statement that "in England, as is seen specifically from Lloyd George's speech, both conditions for a successful proletarian revolution are obviously developing") that Lenin gave his advice to the Communists to assist in the advance to a Government of the Hendersons and Snowdens, in order then to "overthrow the Henderson Government" and advance to the proletarian revolution.

In the winter of 1920 the decline began. The actual perspective of events turned out, in Britain as elsewhere, different from the perspective expected. The newly-formed Communist Party found itself, not in a period of rapid advance to revolution, but in a period of intense reaction, following on the failure and unreadiness of the working class to carry through the revolution, after the war (the last seven years of suffering being nothing less than part of the price of the failure to carry through the revolution, the price of the victory of "peaceful progress"), in a period of bitter defensive struggle against the ever-increasing blows of the capitalist offensive, blows shattering ever more completely

the whole old basis of the working-class movement, striking down the old aristocratic status and sectional privileges, pride and isolation, exposing mercilessly the shams and unrealities and deep-set rottenness and corruption of the whole structure, tearing down the democratic pretences, laying bare the naked dictatorship of capitalism and the brutal struggle of class power, and so ever more profoundly and more deeply—in a new and different way from that expected—revolutionising the working class from the bottom. But it was in this struggle, in the fight against the capitalist offensive, that the new Communist Party found its feet, found its true line of contact with the masses, stood forth as the leader and organiser of resistance to the capitalist offensive, as the mortally hated enemy of the treacheries of the reformist leadership, and established its position as a factor in the working-class movement and as a political factor, until in the historic period of the closing months of 1926 the Communist Party was alone directly leading through its slogans and being followed by the three-quarters of a million miners in their struggle in the face of the opposition of the entire reformist leadership, including the miners' own official leaders.

Following on this experience, by the present period the Communist Party has established a position on the basis of which it is strong enough to advance to a sharper and more direct fight against the reformist leadership, on the political, as well as on the trade union, field. At the same time the class struggle has reached a point which requires this.

It has been suggested that, because the present time represents less of a direct revolutionary situation than 1920, therefore the policy of 1920 should apply all the more to the present time.

This is to miss completely the whole significance of the development between, and to make an abstract and meaningless comparison of, the supposed revolutionary point of two moments as an absolute measure without reference to their place in the line of development. It is just the development between the profound revolutionising experience of the working class and searching exposure of the reformist leadership, that makes the difference, and that makes the revolutionary significance of the present stage *higher* in the whole line of development of the British working class than the temporary boom point of 1920, which did in truth justify the brightest hopes, but in which the workers were in fact not ready, and had still to travel a long road of experience.

4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MACDONALD LABOUR GOVERNMENT AND OF THE GENERAL STRIKE

Four decisive factors have transformed the situation between 1920 and 1928.

The first is the MacDonald Labour Government of 1924.

The second is the General Strike of 1926.

The third is the growing leftward movement in the working class since 1923 up to the present time, and its centring more and more clearly around the Communist Party.

The fourth is the transformation of the Labour

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Party as a result of its own development and in reaction against the Communist Party campaign.

The MacDonald Labour Government of 1924 represents the "Government composed of such men," the "Government of the Hendersons and Snowdens," which Lenin declared necessary for the complete exposure of the social-traitors at the head of the Labour Party.

The significance of the MacDonald Labour Government is not only that it exposed once and for all the character of a Government composed of the Labour Party reformist leaders as a governing instrument and screen of capitalism. It is also that it carried the entire official Labour Party a stage further in its development from an aspirant opposition to a recognised governing party of the bourgeoisie. In the words of their own leaders, it taught "responsibility" in place of the former "irresponsible platform propaganda." From henceforth the Parliamentary Labour Party, even in nominal opposition, and confronted with the Baldwin Government, acts as a conscious coalition, co-operating in and facilitating its work, and even in many important issues (as in the recent India question) prohibiting a single vote against the Government. Its every act continues the exposure to-day. *From this point the passing in and out of various governmental combinations, which may be expected to take place in the future, become only transient episodes of a continuous process.* The official Labour Party becomes a conscious governmental coalition party of the bourgeoisie.

The question has been raised whether the MacDonald Labour Government of 1924 can be regarded as a sufficient exposure, whether it was not too short, incomplete and hastily set aside by the bourgeoisie, for its true significance to be understood by the majority of the workers, who at the close of it were still coming in increasing numbers to the Labour Party, and whether in consequence a renewed experience of a reformist Labour Government is not necessary before the exposure can be regarded as complete. On this basis the proposal is put forward that the Communist objective in the present period and at the coming election should be a "Second Reformist Labour Government." This proposal and outlook is unacceptable. It is based on the misunderstanding, which has already been dealt with in a previous section, that the exposure cannot be regarded as having taken place until it has actually led to the disillusionment of the *majority* of the working class, and that only then can the Communist Party take up its independent fight. This conception (which is in fact a denial of the vanguard role of the Communist Party) defeats itself; since without the independent fight of the Communist Party the process of disillusionment and awakening to the exposure on the part of the majority of the working class cannot be realised.

On this criterion of awaiting first the disillusionment of the majority of the working class it may be confidently predicted that the Second Reformist Labour Government will also be found inadequate (in Sweden, Germany, and elsewhere a whole series of Social-Democratic Governments or Coalition Governments has taken place without the Social-Democratic Party yet losing its hold on the majority of the workers). What is decisive

is that the exposure has taken place, and that in consequence the basis exists in the experience of the working class on which the Communist Party can drive home the lessons of the exposure, utilising every further exposure as it develops, and on this basis raise its independent leadership and win in the struggle the majority of the working class.

The question has also been raised why, if the 1924 Labour Government did in fact already carry the situation forward to a new stage beyond the situation outlined by Lenin, this was not made clear at the time by the International, and that the issue had only been brought forward in a sharp form in 1927. The answer to this is that the new stage beyond the position outlined by Lenin was at the time proclaimed by the International. At the Fifth Congress in the summer of 1924, Zinoviev, the Chairman of the Communist International, in his opening speech on behalf of the International Executive, explicitly declared:

"In 1921 Lenin fought against Wynkoop and other 'Lefts' of that time over the question of Communists joining the Labour Party. *But in 1924 we are face to face with a new situation. A 'Labour' Government exists, and MacDonald is in power.* Therefore our little group of Communists must follow its historic path. . . . Digressions to the Right must be combatted wherever they are met with; election campaigns must be conducted differently; the lines proposed by Rosmer must not be followed; *in their propaganda they must be prepared even for a break.* That is the most important problem for the British Party."

But the British delegation to the Fifth Congress issued an unanimous signed declaration, read out at the Congress, against any basic change, in favour of pursuing the policy of support with criticism, and against opposing Labour Party candidates with independent candidates. The situation was not yet ripe. But the experience of the subsequent years has only strengthened and driven home the necessity for recognising a new stage; and the approach of the General Election now forces the issue to the front in a sharp form. The criticism of the lateness of the new policy, even if it had any foundation, is thus completely irrelevant, as well as extremely inappropriate in the hands of the opponents of change: the passage of time and development in between make the issue more urgent and not less.

The MacDonald Labour Government was, in fact, followed as anticipated by the leftward mass-wave of the working class which culminated in the General Strike of 1926.

The General Strike carried the whole process yet a stage further forward. Where the Labour Government had exposed the right reformist leaders, the General Strike exposed, above all, the so-called "left" reformist leaders, revealing them as identical with the right in the actual struggle, and even more dangerous because of their dishonest and semi-revolutionary phrases. It exposed the entire reformist leadership as a whole, right and "left," as incapable of leading the workers' struggle just because of their being tied to the capitalist State. And it revealed that the workers' struggle had reached a point at which it could no longer

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be conducted within the old reformist-democratic legalist bounds, but must either transcend those bounds or go down in final defeat. Since then the present period of the Trade Union Act has driven in and reinforced these lessons, compelling the "left" reformist phrasemongers to drop their pretences and take refuge in complete co-operation with the employers, in the present industrial peace campaign.

In this way the process of events has carried through a fundamental exposure of the reformist leadership as a whole, clearing the way for the advance of the Communist Party as more and more visibly the sole party capable of fighting for the interests of the working class in the present period of capitalist decline.

At the same time the leftward advance of the main body of the workers, corresponding to the exposure of the reformist leadership, and, in fact, forming the basis of it (compelling in turn the Labour Government, Red Friday, and the General Strike) has gone forward during the same period and still continues. This left advance of the workers, and the transformation of the Labour Party in reaction against it, each require separate examination as essential parts of the basis of the new stage.

5. THE LEFTWARD ADVANCE OF THE WORKING CLASS

The leftward advance of the working class in the present period, since the post-war boom and depression, began already to show itself markedly by the spring of 1923, and has developed continuously since then, and more and more clearly around the Communist Party as its centre.

When in 1921 the historical betrayal of Black Friday struck the British working-class movement low and ended the post-war period of militancy, the Communist Party was only just formed. Its first task was in that period of black depression to gather up the threads of working-class struggle for the renewal of the fight. This was the task and situation to which the Communist Party had to adapt itself in 1922, turning over from the old sectarian traditions to the conditions of mass work, as laid down by the Third Congress of the International. In consequence, when the new wave of working-class militancy and unrest arose by the beginning of 1923, proclaiming itself in the host of sectional strikes and fighting ballots in the spring of that year (and thus defeating the expectation of the reformist leaders who thought that Black Friday had given the movement its quietus for a decade), this new wave grew up from the first in close and organic union with the Communist Party. By the spring of 1923 the Communist Party was already leading sectional struggles of the workers in face of the Opposition of the official leadership; had already proclaimed the slogan of the General Strike as the means to unite these struggles and meet the capitalist offensive; and its membership of 3,500 was maintaining a steady circulation of the Party organ of 50,000 throughout the working class. The nucleus of the left-wing was thus already formed, and that around the Communist Party.

In this way, when the MacDonald Government

came into office in the beginning of 1924, it came into office on top of a wave of working-class unrest, which it was its business to quell and quieten. It failed. The first issue that confronted it was a strike; in mid-career it had already signed an Emergency Powers proclamation to smash a strike, and only at the last moment succeeded in avoiding its issue; it fell finally on its failure to resist working-class pressure against its attempted Communist prosecution and over the Anglo-Soviet Treaty. By August, 1924, the left movement was strong enough to take organised form; and the Minority Movement was launched as an organised left opposition in the trade unions. At its first conference this movement was able to unite delegates of over a quarter of a million trade unionists, within six months of over half a million, within twelve months of three-quarters of a million, and within a year and a half over a million trade unionists or one-quarter of the entire forces of trade unionists. It was in the face of this growth that the reformist leadership (pseudo-left as well as right) turned in the end increasingly to the policy of splits, exclusions and suspensions; and a member of the General Council openly defended this policy at the 1926 Trades Union Congress on the ground that otherwise "within a short time the Minority Movement would become the majority."

Thus it was only when the growing left mass movement had already reached strength and volume great enough to raise apprehensions in the reformist leadership, that the pseudo-left leaders came forward in the second half of 1924 and endeavoured to place themselves at its head, in order to oust the Communist Party from its position and prevent the growth of the movement to any real issue. From this followed the "left" phase of 1924-26, with its mingled seriousness below and comic opera buffoonery and cowardice above. In this period it was the manifest task of the Communist Party, while utilising the situation to promote in every possible way the growth of the left mass movement, to expose relentlessly the character and weakness of the pseudo-left leaders beforehand, to foretell the inevitable debacle if their leadership were trusted, and in this way to strive to prevent the debacle if possible, or at any rate to prepare the minds of the workers for it and strengthen the future leadership of the Party.*

* In November, 1924, at the beginning of the whole episode, the present writer wrote in the "Communist International" (English edition, New Series, No. 8):

"In the period immediately in front the concentration of the Party will need to be far more specifically directed to this Left, its ideology and actions (Hicks, Purcell, Cook, Maxton, etc.), than to MacDonald and MacDonaldism. . . .

"At this point arises an extreme danger—the greatest danger of the coming period. It inevitably follows from the character of this Left that they have not the necessary clearness or cohesion to lead, to form a united force or to carry out serious planning or preparatory work. At the same time they are easily able, owing to the weakness of the revolutionary development in England, and to the authority and prestige of their positions, to win the ear of the masses with a handful of phrases and promises, and so to gather the rising movement of the masses to themselves and then to dissipate it in a comic opera fiasco. . . .

"Against this danger the only safeguard of the wor-

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The Party was not strong enough to be able to prevent the pseudo-left leaders from drawing the movement into the debacle of May 12th, 1926. But the collapse of the General Strike did not mean the collapse of the left mass-movement. This is the most significant fact of the present period. The left mass movement has gone forward, all the stronger and clearer for the defection of the pseudo-left leaders, and ever more clearly around the leadership of the Communist Party. The continuance of the miners' struggle for seven months in face of the resistance of the entire reformist leadership was the most powerful evidence of this. By the last quarter of 1926 the ballots of the three-quarter million miners on strike were turning down every reformist leader, including Cook, and following the direct political lead of the Communist Party. This experience is a portent of the indubitable future.

In 1927, in the face of the heavy reaction, the process has gone on. The overwhelming election victories of the Communists among the Scottish and South Wales miners, with the defeating of old and well-known leaders, such as Smillie (the one-time hero of mining trade unionism) and Adamson (former Chairman of the Labour Party) by young and relatively unknown Communists; the record London May Day demonstration of 100,000 workers, organised and led by the Communists and revolutionary left in the face of the boycott of the official Labour leadership, who did not even venture to attempt a central meeting but could only muster a few local meetings of a few thousands; the success of the Miners' March in the face of the official ban; the stormy and police-guarded meetings of the reformist Labour leaders in the industrial areas—all these are evidence of the left advance that it still is continuing.

6. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE LABOUR PARTY

But alongside this leftward advance goes the transformation of the Labour Party by the reformist leadership throughout this period, as a result of the left advance and growing influence of the Communist Party, a transformation to increasing discipline and doctrinal

kers is the Communist Party. Here is defined the supreme specific task of the present period. The Communist Party must make it impossible to repeat the bitter experience of 1919-21—the frivolous dispersal and ultimate betrayal of the growing unrest of the masses. The Communist Party must conduct an unceasing ideological warfare with the Left, exposing from the outset every expression that betrays confusion, ambiguity, vain bravado, frivolousness, opposition to actual struggle and practical subjection to the Right wing. The Communist Party must press forward every direct expression of struggle to the practical tests of immediate action or preparation."

The "fiasco" took place eighteen months later. There is no doubt that there were some misunderstandings by Communists of the united front as a direct personal supporting and building up the prestige of these treacherous pseudo-Left leaders, and their exposure only after the event (a point at which the most backward workers can see the exposure, but which is too late for Communists to begin, if they are to be leaders of the workers and not followers in the rear).

uniformity in order to entrench their position against the possibility of a left victory in the Labour Party. This is the final and all-important change in the situation between 1920 and 1928.

It should be noted that Lenin made it expressly clear that the refusal of the reformist leadership to form a common bloc with the Communists, and deliberate choice of an alliance with the Liberal bourgeoisie rather than with the revolutionary working class, would be a *greater* gain to the Communists than their acceptance, because this refusal would itself be an important part of the exposure of the reformist leadership:

"If the Hendersons and Snowdens reject a bloc with us on these terms, we gain still more. For we have at once thus shown to the masses (please note that even in the purely Menshevik entirely opportunist Independent Labour Party the masses are for Soviets), that the Hendersons prefer their own nearness to the capitalists to the unification of all the workers. We have at once gained in the eyes of the masses, who, especially after the brilliant and highly truthful, highly useful (for Communists) exposition of Lloyd George, will sympathise with the unification of all workers against the coalition of Lloyd George and Churchill. We have scored again, for we have demonstrated before the masses that the Hendersons and Snowdens are afraid to defeat Lloyd George, are afraid to take power alone, that they strive secretly to gain the support of Lloyd George, who openly stretches a hand to Churchill against the Labour Party. . . .

"Should the Hendersons and Snowdens refuse to form a bloc with the Communists, the latter would at once have gained in the work of obtaining the sympathies of the masses and of discrediting the Hendersons and Snowdens."

The question of the particular form of bloc which Lenin proposed never arose. But the principle he was setting out applies even more closely to the form in which the question did arise, the issue of Communist affiliation to the Labour Party in the first place, and later also the issue of Communist rights of membership in the Labour Party and actual exclusion. In this process the reformist leadership have a hundred times over, in a whole series of stages, exposed their preference of alliance with capitalism to "the unification of all the workers." If Lenin could declare that, by the single refusal of an election bloc on their part in 1920, we would have succeeded to have "demonstrated before the masses" the true character of the reformist leadership, what would he have said of the seven-and-a-half years' continuous patient wooing on the part of the Communist Party and continuous rebuffs and increasing blows from the side of the reformist leadership?

The application of the Communist Party for affiliation to the Labour Party was first made in 1920, and was rejected by the Labour Party Executive in August, 1920. This rejection was confirmed by the Labour Party Conference in 1921 by a majority of 4,115,000 to 224,000. Subsequent applications were similarly rejected by 3,086,000 to 261,000 votes in 1922, by 2,880,000 to 366,000 in 1923, and by 3,185,000 to 193,000 in 1924. Since then the issue has been prevented from coming

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before the Conference again by the newly-passed three years' standing order, excluding for three years the recurrence of questions already decided; and in the normal course the issue will come up again in 1928. The size of the majorities against is not in itself of very great importance, save as an indication of the closeness of the reformist bureaucratic bloc on the national trade unions; as the votes are block votes (each union voting as a block), and considerable minorities favourable to the Communists in the principle unions are thus ignored.

This rejection of the Communist Party application by the Labour Party (which had previously accepted without question the British Socialist Party) was the first transformation from its old federal all-inclusive character. Since, however, the Communists could still be freely active as delegates from their trade unions, and even as individual members, it was evident that the reformist leadership would have to go further and enter on a course which inevitably leads to the increasing disruption of the working-class character of the Labour Party. This is the process which has developed during the past six years.

In 1922 the Labour Party Executive at the Edinburgh Conference brought forward the first exclusion proposals in the history of the Labour Party. These, which were carried by 342 votes to 181, were not yet directed openly against the Communists, but declared that delegates could not be accepted unless they were prepared to sign acceptance of the constitution and principles of the Labour Party, or if they were members of a party running candidates not approved by the Labour Party.

The Edinburgh proposals were attempted to be carried out during 1922-4 and failed. The Communists were easily able to sign the constitution, which was a formal document not containing the reformist programme; and their activity and influence in the Labour Party increased. The Labour Party Executive had therefore to come out into the open with a direct attack.

The 1924 Labour Government crisis precipitated the issue. In May, 1924, a Communist was actually adopted, and endorsed by the Labour Party Executive, as an official Labour candidate, while the Labour Government was in office, and in consequence found himself at once officially supposed to be a supporter of the Labour Government and actually opposed to its whole policy—a confusing position, which led to violent and not unjustified criticism of his whole campaign both by the Labour Party chiefs on the one side and by the Communist International (at the Fifth Congress) on the other. This sharpened the whole question. When the Labour Government fell on the two Communist issues (the Campbell case and the Soviet Treaty), the Labour Party Executive came forward to the 1924 Conference, which was held in the midst of the crisis on the two issues and on the eve of the final resignation, with a considered memorandum on the question of the Communist Party and the Labour Party and definite proposals against the Communists as such.

The 1924 Memorandum on "The Labour Party and the Communist Party" is a document of some importance, and marks a stage in the development of the

Labour Party. For the first time the federal inclusive character of the Labour Party is explicitly denied:

"The Communist Party pleads that as the Labour Party is of the nature of a Federation, no working-class organisation should be excluded. It is forgotten, however, that, Federation though the Party may be, it has principles at the base of its organisation. The active membership of our party have been enrolled to secure definite objects by certain definite methods."

These principles are declared to be "Parliamentary democracy," etc. Thus for the first time the Labour Party is definitely declared to be a doctrinal body, based on the acceptance of Liberal-reformism as the condition of membership, and not an collective working-class organisation. But since the organising basis continues to be the trade unions, the policy of exclusions necessarily follows. This issue is faced. The Executive frankly confesses the success of the Communists in the trade unions and Labour Party:

"The membership of the Communist Party now numbers somewhere about 4,000, and these are to be found actively engaged for the most part in the ranks of the trade unions and local Labour Parties. Their energy and enthusiasm are undoubted, and their capacity for turning every political and industrial occasion to the advantage of Communist propaganda is as ingenious as, too often, it is unscrupulous. Their purpose, openly avowed, is to scrap our present methods and objects and transfer the Party into a Communist organisation."

In consequence a policy of direct restriction against Communists is advocated. Two proposals were carried: the first, a ban on Communists as Labour candidates; the second, the direct exclusion of Communists from individual membership of the Labour Party. This last was carried only by 1,804,000 to 1,540,000 votes, and did not formally come from the Executive.

In the following year the attempt to carry out this decision in the face of local opposition led to considerable confusion. But in 1925 at the Liverpool Conference, a definite policy of exclusion was adopted (i) excluding Communists from individual membership, and (ii) recommending trade unions not to nominate Communists as delegates, with an instruction to the Executive to enforce this decision.

The Liverpool decision carried the exclusion policy a whole stage further, from the question of individuals to the whole revolutionary left and to entire local sections. Any local section sympathetic to the Communists, and refusing to exclude them, became itself excluded *en bloc*. This has been the process of the past two years. A growing number of local Labour Parties in London, in South Wales, and in Scotland have been "disaffiliated" or excluded. The actual number excluded—about a score so far—is less important than the very much wider process of which it is only a symptom, the process of disruption and remodelling on a new limited basis the local movements throughout the country, as a result of the enforcing of the Liverpool decisions. The local bases of the Labour Party which are its actual living bases (the national trade union

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membership being essentially a passive financial membership) have thus been going through a surgical transformation in the interest of the reformist leadership. The trade unions still possess the formal right to nominate their own delegates, though under an instruction, which has not yet been made obligatory, to refrain from nominating Communists; but all offices, local district or national (including executive positions, both local and national) are required to be in the hands of the reformists; and a majority of Communists or left delegates in any section, endeavouring to maintain solidarity with the Communists, leads to exclusion. In addition, the first signs have begun within the trade unions themselves of similar action by the National Executives to control their membership and local sections (ban on affiliation to the Minority Movement, suspension of whole trade union branches, etc.).

Finally, new rules for the Labour Party are understood to be in preparation, which may lead to the enforcing also of the exclusion of Communists as trade union delegates, so closing the final avenue.

Thus the "full liberty" of the workers within the Labour Party, which Lenin spoke of as one of the governing conditions of the policy of affiliation in 1920, no longer exists. It may be added with certainty that, in proportion as Communist influence grows within the working class, in the same proportion the British reformist leadership will, as in the Continental countries, tighten their discipline and exclusion measures in order to maintain their hold.

7. THE NECESSITY FOR A NEW STAGE OF POLICY

From this survey of the transformation of the situation between 1920 and 1928 it is possible to summarise the reasons for a new stage of policy.

First, a stage has been reached in the development of the political situation which requires a sharpening and clearer bringing out of the fight between working-class policy on the one hand and the capitalist reaction, supported by the Labour Party social-imperialist leadership, on the other. In the first period after the war the Labour Party was still the vehicle through which the awakening workers were expressing their fight against capitalism and advancing forward; and it was, therefore, necessary for the Communist Party to play a subordinate role of critical support within the Labour Party in order to hasten the moment of exposure. But in the new period this situation has changed. Since the Labour Government of 1924, and still more during the present period of visibly unreal "opposition" and practical united front in relation to the Baldwin Government, the Labour Party leadership stands more and more clearly exposed as the defender of capitalism and ally of Baldwin on every important issue; and if an independent working-class fight is to be expressed at the next election it can only be expressed through the direct fight of the Communist Party.

Second, a stage has been reached in the development of the mass movement which makes such a sharpening of the issues both possible and necessary. The process of revolutionisation within the working class; the in-

creasing differentiation within the working class; the exposure and consolidation of the reformist leadership; and the growing disillusionment of the active workers and seeking after new leadership: all these point to the necessity of a new stage of the fight, if the development is to be carried forward and not fall back, through failure of adequate expression, to apathy and decay. The left advance in the working class, after all the momentous events of the past few years, needs to find its political expression; and it cannot find this through the Labour Party. The extreme danger of the present period is that this left advance, for lack of finding expression and leadership, should fall back on itself in apathy, disillusionment and decay. The danger of this is already ominously shown by the decline of the Labour vote in the industrial areas in the municipal elections of 1927, as compared with 1926, and advance only in the more backward areas; particularly noticeable is it that in the most advanced "red" industrial area, Glasgow, the decline and actual loss of Labour seats is greatest. The same lesson is reinforced by the Northampton bye-election, where, in an old stronghold of the industrial workers the Labour vote, after all the experience of 1924, 1926 and 1927, of the General Strike, the Baldwin Government and the Trade Union Act, actually fell below the level in 1923.

This danger, the greatest danger at present confronting the movement, can only be overcome by the independent leadership of the Communist Party, which will at once respond to and carry forward the left advance.

Third, a stage has been reached in the development of the Communist Party which gives it adequate strength and basis to advance to this independent leadership. The Communist Party is no longer a new and untried body, lacking lines of mass contact or systematic participation in the daily struggle; it has a definite measure of mass support and mass influence, systematically organised through its press, and through a whole series of lines of contact including the mass organisation of the Minority Movement, and it has already a tried record before the working class as a fighter in the workers' struggle. The Communist Party is now able to enter into the direct fight against the Labour Party leadership, not as a sectarian invader into the main field of the struggle, but as the established leader and spokesman of the militant working class.

Further, the position of the Communist Party is now such as to make this advance not only possible but necessary. The danger confronting the Communist Party is the danger of losing the considerable measure of mass support it has won if it is not able to carry its supporters forward to a clear fight. The decline of membership since the beginning of 1927, although undoubtedly in large part explicable on the basis of objective conditions of the increasing persecution of the membership, should not be lightly disregarded as satisfactorily explained on this ground alone, without recognising the political danger signal that is also contained in it. At the same time as the leftward advance of the working class is going forward, in 1927, visibly in every direction, the Communist Party is not only stationary but actually going down. This is a very dangerous situation. The key to this situation lies in the Com-

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Communist Party going forward to the independent political leadership for which the leftward-moving body of the working class is seeking, and so instead of holding back in deference to the reformist leadership and failing to participate directly on the struggle, instead directly leading the left advance and gaining an ever-increasing accession of strength thereby.

Fourth, the transformation of the Labour Party in any case forces the issue to the front by closing the former avenues of expression through it more and more, and compelling the facing of a direct conflict. The transformation of the Labour Party into a limited social-democratic type of party is not yet complete in one respect only, the selection of trade union delegates; there is thus here still an avenue for propaganda and activity within the Labour Party, and even to a limited degree the influencing of the selection of candidates. Nevertheless, the limitation of the Labour Party and increasing discipline on a narrow opportunist basis already exists in respect of officials, individual membership, election programme, official endorsement of candidatures and prohibition of Communist candidates, as well as in the controlling and remodelling of local sections, and exclusion of revolutionary local sections. All this means that if the revolutionary working-class fight is to be expressed at all in the election it will inevitably have to face direct conflict with the official Labour Party. Even where a candidate has been adopted by the overwhelming decision of the local Labour movement and successfully elected, as in the case of comrade Saklatvala, the National Labour Party Executive has already placed its candidate in the field against him, after first excluding the local Labour Party and creating its own recognised "local Labour Party" in its place. In the same way, where local Labour Parties have been disaffiliated elsewhere, the National Executive has created its own new local Labour Parties, so that in a number of cases the two sections exist side by side, and conflicts have already taken place between candidates of the two sections in municipal election contests. (It may be noted that in these direct fights the Communist or left candidates of the disaffiliated parties have polled considerably more votes than the "official Labour" candidates.) Thus the split in the working-class forces has already been made by the Labour Party Executive; and conflicts in the election are in any case inevitable. The only question at issue is whether, the situation having reached this stage, the time has not come for the Communist Party, recognising the situation clearly, to advance to the offensive, and openly lead the fight against the official Labour Party leadership.

This does not mean that there is any question of abandoning the tactics of the united front, or the continuance of work in the Labour Party organisations to the maximum extent possible (through the trade unions). On the contrary, the tactics of the united front from below became more important than ever in the new stage. It is essential that the Communist Party, if its fighting policy is to be correctly understood by the workers, should make effectively clear in every possible way that its fight is not against the workers in the Labour Party, but only against the corrupt and reactionary official

leadership. The Communist Party should endeavour to build up a body of mass support of the local workers around its candidate, by securing the adoption of the candidate at mass meetings of workers, calling conferences, putting forward a united front programme of immediate political issues, appealing to local working-class organisations on the basis of this united front programme, endeavouring to build up a representative workers' electoral committee in support of the candidate, etc.

On the other hand, the proposal that the Communist Party should only endeavour to present candidates through the machinery of the local Labour Party or disaffiliated local Labour Party cannot be accepted. Certainly, wherever we can secure the support of this, we shall be very glad to do so. But the view has been put forward that the delegates' conferences of the local Labour Party, constituting its "selection conference" of its parliamentary candidate, should represent for us the decisive will of the local working class: that is to say, that if, after we have endeavoured to secure the adoption of our candidate at such a conference, the conference chooses instead a MacDonald or a Thomas, we should accept this result loyally as the true will of the local workers, and not attempt any contest. Such a view cannot be accepted. Not only it is the case that a delegate meeting of this type, based on the existing organisation and structure of the trade union branches, etc., is already removed from the workers, as experience of any locality abundantly shows; but in addition, the reformist machine to-day, especially after the Liverpool decisions and reorganisation manipulation, has a considerable grip on the machinery of the local Labour Parties to make them unrepresentative of the workers. This consideration is of especial importance in the case of prominent national leaders of the Labour Party, such as MacDonald, Thomas and Clynes, whom it is of first-class political importance that we should fight, but who may hold the local Labour Party machine in their control, sometimes by very notorious manipulation. Here the local working-class united front must be built up in the face of the reformist machine.*

A further proposal which is unacceptable is the suggestion that contests should not be undertaken where there is any possibility of the division of the working-class forces leading to the return of the open capitalist (Liberal or Conservative) candidate. Such a condition is equivalent to the abandonment of any contest. In hardly a single case, with the existing British electoral system, is it possible for a division of the working-class forces not to lead to the possibility of the victory of the capitalist candidate. This certainly applies to those contests which it has already been decided to undertake,

* The importance of fighting MacDonald, Thomas, Clynes, etc., is not a question of selecting them as more "reactionary" or "right" than the other reformist leaders, as has been sometimes supposed. Any such distinction is misleading and dangerous; and it would be of value to include among those selected to fight some typical pseudo-left leader in order to make clear the basic character of our fight. The importance of fighting MacDonald, Thomas, Clynes, etc., is as nationally prominent leaders of the Labour Party, in order to raise the direct fight of the Communist Party against the official Labour Party leadership to the national plane.

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such as in comrade Saklatvala's case, or in the case of the disaffiliated parties. Such a condition as a governing condition must, therefore, be rejected as invalid. It is necessary to face the facts, and to recognise that, whatever our policy in regard to the Labour Party candidates in general, at any rate in those key constituencies which the Communist Party is contesting the mobilisation of the class-conscious workers as the nucleus of the future political mass force of the working class is more important than the very limited value of a unified "Labour" victory behind a candidate representing the policy of "the third party of the bourgeoisie."

These and many similar questions arise, and will need careful treatment. It has been the purpose of the present article only to deal with the central issue of principle. But this issue of principle itself inevitably raises a whole series of further tactical questions, such as the question of our policy in those constituencies where there is only a Labour candidate, the question of our campaign of affiliation to the Labour Party, the question of our policy in relation to the disaffiliated local Labour Parties, the Labour Party Left Wing, etc. All these questions will need careful discussion and decision in order that a consistent line of policy may be worked out as a whole.

S. DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF THE NEW LINE OF POLICY AND THEIR SOLUTION

There is no question that there are many genuine difficulties in the way of the new stage of policy proposed. Examination will, however, show that the difficulties are less than the danger of failing to take the necessary step in advance. It will be useful to consider one or two of the difficulties most often raised.

The first difficulty raised is that the adoption of any new and more combative policy will inevitably lead to an intensification of the process of repression and exclusion against the Communists and their sympathisers, thus hampering and endangering our work in the mass organisations of the trade unions and the Labour Party and raising the risk of Communist isolation.

In answer to this objection it should be pointed out that the process of repression and exclusion is in any case already on its way on an accelerating scale, and will certainly not be checked by even the most submissive policy, so long as our propaganda represents, in fact, a danger to the reformist leadership. The process of exclusion corresponds, not so much to this or that policy on our part (no question of an exclusion policy arose with regard to the isolated revolutionaries in the Labour Party of old, despite any defiance of discipline), but to the growth of Communist influence. As Communist influence grows, the policy of expulsion and splitting by the reformist leadership will also grow, and we must be prepared for this to develop in England as in other countries.

At the Fifth International Congress in 1924, when a similar type of question was already discussed (and the time, following on the MacDonald Labour Government, was already ripe for a full review of the whole situation), the viewpoint was expressed in a declaration

of the British Delegation that the question of independent candidatures against Labour Party candidates was only a tactical question, but that it should not be attempted "at this moment, under the present circumstances" because it might lead to exclusions:

"The question of nominating Parliamentary candidates against the candidates of the Labour Party is a question of tactics and not of principle. . . . When the Labour Party candidate has been selected against the will of the Communist Party, we should not, at this moment, under the present circumstances, when the Communist Party is still weak, oppose with an independent candidate of our own, having in mind that according to the rules of the Labour Party, groups who oppose Labour candidates are liable to be expelled from the Labour movement. . . . But while not opposing with an independent candidate of our own, we should participate in the campaign for the single purpose of urging the constituencies to demand revolutionary action from the Labour candidates."

The exclusion policy which is here feared as a result of placing independent candidates has now happened without the placing of independent candidates. The condition for abstention put forward in 1924 thus no longer applies to the situation of to-day. On the other hand, the definition of Communist policy for the election as one of "demanding revolutionary action" from the MacDonalds and Thomases, whether applicable or not to the situation of 1924, is certainly not adequate for the situation to-day.

It should further be remembered that the contests already decided will in any case involve conflicts between the Communist Party and the official Labour Party; and the reformist leadership will certainly in consequence in any case utilise to the full the slogan of "splitting the front" against the Communists, and in pursuance of their exclusion tactics.

The second difficulty raised, and the most important, is the question whether the mass of the workers would understand a direct fight of the Communist Party against Labour Party reactionary candidates, and would not regard it as a breaking of the working-class front and assistance to the bourgeoisie, thus leading to the isolation of the Communist Party from the sympathy of the mass of the workers. The answer to this question depends on the estimate of the degree of development of the working class and of the political situation in Britain. It has been the purpose of this article to argue that the Communist Party has now an adequate measure of support and potential support within the working class, and that the experience of the workers through the process of the MacDonald Government, Red Friday, the General Strike, the miners' struggle, the present repression, and the exposure of the reformist leadership, has gone far enough to warrant such a step forward. Certainly, it would be misunderstood and adversely criticised by a large body of the more backward workers (just as the original raising of the fight against the Liberal Party thirty years ago was similarly criticised as a "splitting" policy). But it is the task of revolutionary leadership, while maintaining contact in every possible way with the backward workers and making

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clear our policy, not to determine our policy by the level of understanding they have reached (which would amount to a repudiation of the role of the vanguard), but to determine our policy by the whole political situation and the true interests of the working class, and then to make clear the reasons of our policy and bring it home to the widest possible body of workers. The problem is similar to the general problem of our approach to the workers within the Social-Democratic Parties. We cannot weaken our fight against the social-democratic leaders for fear of the misunderstandings by a section of the workers of such a policy as a splitting of the workers' forces against capitalism; but we seek at the same time to dispel those misunderstandings by our readiness to enter a united working-class front in any struggle against capitalism, and to prove thus the responsibility of the reformist leadership for the split by their policy of alliance with capitalism.

This should not be too difficult to make clear to the main body of the workers in Britain at the present stage. We can show that for eight years we have consistently offered and worked for the united working-class front, and that it has been consistently refused and broken by the reformist leadership. We can renew our offer of the united front on the basis of acceptance of affiliation, cancellation of the exclusions, and unrestricted local choice of candidates. Failing that we can show our right and duty to fight; and we should be able to show, for the understanding of all, that the MacDonalds and

Thomases are identical with capitalism, differing in practically no fundamental issue from Baldwin and Lloyd George, and that, therefore, the registering of even a minority revolutionary vote against them, so far from being an assistance to capitalism, would represent the strongest possible blow against capitalism.

Finally, the forcing of the issue, by a definite fighting step, and by the consequent controversy and struggle to which it will give rise, is itself a necessary part of the process of education, compelling the leftward moving workers to range themselves and find their true camp, and compelling the main body of the workers to think, to face new issues, and to realise the choice of leadership and policy which confronts them.

Certainly any new step in policy will need the most careful preparation, and the fullest working out beforehand of our propaganda, to make sure of understanding, first within our own membership, second among the left workers, and third among the widest body of workers; and, above all, to realise this, it will need the correct choice of time in the objective situation. What is put forward in the present article is only put forward as a contribution to discussion of the principles at issue. But what is certain is that the British working-class movement is entering on a critical stage; that the position is ripe for a move forward; that, failing such a move forward, there is every danger of a period of disintegration and reaction; and that the possibility of such a move forward rests entirely with the initiative and fighting leadership of the Communist Party.

Results and Prospects of the United Front

A. Lozovsky

(In connection with the coming Profintern, R.I.L.U., Congress)

WHEN it became apparent that the systematic attack of capitalism was not meeting with the requisite opposition from the workers, the Comintern and the Profintern, in 1921, issued the slogan of the united front. The Third Congress of the Profintern proclaimed the slogan of international unity of the trade union movement, as the logical deduction from this tactic. But we should remember that the united front was never intended to obliterate existing differences or to find a half-way policy between reformism and Communism. The united front was intended to strengthen the fighting capacity of the workers. We always insisted that a sound united front and real proletarian unity presupposed the free discussion of all questions, the criticism of incorrect views and the struggle to spread our views in a united organisation.

The reformists, however, interpreted the united front in quite a different manner. They, in order to frustrate united action and smash organised unity, demanded that the revolutionary workers renounce their convictions, refrain from criticism, and recognise the principles and tactics of the Amsterdam International.

In practically every country the reformists put forward such preliminary conditions for the united front

and unity, and needless to say, not a single revolutionary worker was to be won over by such proposals. This fact was seized upon by the reformists as a pretext to denounce the treachery of the Communists and to declare that the united front policy was a fraud, etc.

All these accusations were absolutely without foundation, since neither the Profintern nor the Comintern had made any secret of their real intentions and task in proposing the united front and unity. We declared openly that we wished to strengthen the fighting capacity of the workers and accomplish this task first of all by weakening the influence of the reformists on the workers as a whole.

The struggle to win over the masses implies the struggle to make the workers independent of the bourgeoisie, the establishment of a sharp line of demarcation between the exploiters and the exploited, the liberation of the workers from bourgeois ideology, the cessation of class collaboration and so on. In short the struggle for the masses is first of all the struggle for a correct working class policy.

It is necessary to put correct working class policy into practice through the workers' political and trade union organisations. And if the trade unions are to

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carry out a correct policy there must be complete agreement between the army and the commanding staff. In the present instance the members of the trade unions constitute the army, but whatever the army may be, there is nothing for it but defeat should the leadership remain in the hands of the reactionary reformist staff. Hence an indispensable part of our struggle for the masses must be a struggle for leadership.

The struggle for leadership meets with fierce opposition from the international reformists. The reformists who are at the head of both European and American trade unions consider every union to be their own special property and regard with the utmost suspicion any attempt of the rank and file members to change the existing trade union policy. This suspicion arises from the fact that international reformism has its own ways and methods of "struggle," its own means of solving problems, which never go beyond the framework of capitalist conditions. Concern for the normal progress of industry, for the healthy development of capitalist production, for the increase of the productivity of labour, for industrial peace, all constitute the component parts of the policy of international reformism. And the revolutionary trade union movement endangers the position of the reformists, who foresee the loss of their life-long jobs; they are prepared to use the utmost violence against the growing revolutionary opposition in the ranks of the trade unions. This accounts for the growing intensity of the struggle which keeps pace with the growth in the importance of the revolutionary opposition; and, therefore, the danger of a split increases in every country with the growth of the revolutionary forces. The danger of a split is growing because the Amsterdam leaders hold on like grim death to their jobs, even going to the length of an alliance with the police in their fight against the growing revolutionary consciousness of the masses.

Reformists and Police

The experience of the past few years shows that international reformism is prepared to go to any lengths to prevent the revolutionary wing of the trade union movement from being successful. The most favoured method of struggle is mass expulsion, and if mass expulsion is of no avail, then the united front with the police.

A case in point is the Roumanian Congress held in Klausenberg in 1923, when the Social-Democrats, who constituted only one-third of the delegates, had the congress building surrounded by police, who had orders not to admit any delegate who was not in possession of a social-democratic ticket. In this manner two-thirds of the delegates were excluded and the social-democrats secured a "victory." Another instance is the joint attack of the Yugo-Slav social-democrats and the police on the trade unions, and the seizure of the premises belonging to the revolutionary trade unions. Nor should we forget how the Bulgarian social-democrats destroyed the revolutionary trade unions under cover of the Tsankoff reign of terror.

Such methods are not confined to the Balkans. In the United States, the A.F. of L. in conjunction with the courts and the troops smash revolutionary trade unions (Garment Workers, Furriers, etc.). In Great

Britain the reactionaries in Glasgow called in a police detachment to prevent left wing delegates from attending a Trades Council meeting.

In Esthonia, after the trade unions had been smashed, the social-democrats formed a bureau with the assistance of the Amsterdam International and convened a congress; only those unions which previously recognised the principles and tactics of the Amsterdam International were eligible to attend. Similar examples could be given by the hundred from the "normal" activity of the reformist trade unions in Germany, France, Switzerland, Czecho-Slovakia, Italy, Belgium, etc.

There has so far never been an instance of the bourgeois State as represented by the courts, police and army, refusing to assist the social-democrats against the Communists. This assistance proves the actual collusion between the reformist organisations and the bourgeois State.

At the present moment the British T.U.C., with its slogan of industrial peace, the German Federation of Trade Unions (A.D.G.B.) with its advocacy of economic democracy, and the reformist trade unions in France with their programme of peaceful penetration into the bourgeois government by means of the Economic Council these are all elements of the same process of collaboration between the bourgeois government and the reformist trade unions. We are faced with the formidable question of how to conquer the leadership of the trade unions if it should become an integral part of the bourgeois State.

Suppression of Discussion

The situation is made still more difficult by the action of the reformist trade unions in depriving the rank and file members of the customary right of discussion. Democratic centralism in all reformist trade unions is a thing of the past; all are now based on bureaucratic centralism; and it would be utopian to think it possible to conquer the trade union machine by normal trade union methods. The past shows clearly that the Amsterdam leaders have not the least desire to be subordinate to the will of the masses, and that the workers cannot accomplish a change of leadership by using their usual rights. How then is the question of leadership to be decided? The struggle for the leadership in the trade unions is a question of strength, and not one of trade union rights. This means that it is not necessary to cherish the illusion of the possibility of conquering the trade union leadership.

Do not forget that the A.F. of L., the A.D.G.B. and the T.U.C. refuse to deviate from their policy under pressure from below, and if that pressure should become excessive they would not shrink from calling in the aid of the bourgeoisie to overcome the danger. The reformist trade union leaders are so tied up with the bourgeois State that they will be overthrown together with it. But since the downfall of the bourgeois State in most countries cannot be regarded as an immediate possibility, the question arises of the necessity of seeking other means of securing the leadership of the masses.

Since the reformists can rely on the support of the bourgeois State, we must concentrate only on the support of the working class and deliberate how best to strengthen through organisation the support we have won in the political field. In what manner should we

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lead those whom we have won over through propaganda? And how, are we to lead the masses should the leadership be in the hands of the enemy?

An essential pre-requisite for leadership is the organisation of our own forces no matter where they may be. The revolutionary wing may have various organisational forms, but to be effective it is necessary to have an army which is strongly welded together, well-disciplined and possessing a high degree of class-consciousness. A certain dualism arises in the course of our struggle for the masses in every reformist organisation. Such dualism is unavoidable, and we should not be content with its formal existence. Revolutionary workers must not remain scattered within the reformist unions. Nor is it enough to have our bureaux, committees, fractions, etc.; we must know how far these organs have the support of the masses and lesser officials.

Why must we know this? These facts are necessary to enable us to ascertain at any moment what measure of independent activity the revolutionary wing can undertake. And here we are faced with the important question of the right of trade union members to rise against their reformist leaders and decide in a revolutionary manner those questions which the majority of the members consider important. Trade union members always possess the right of revolt, when the unions which they have formed act as a component part of the bourgeois State and its system of oppression. But since the question of revolt is at the same time a question of strength, the question arises whether such tactics are not contrary to the tactic of the united front? Does the tactic of the united front only presuppose legal and constitutional methods of struggle in accordance with the statutes?

“Formal Rights”

Recent tremendous social conflicts give the answer to these questions. Take, for instance, the General Strike in England. Formally the General Council had the right to call off the strike, but in reality it betrayed the British Labour movement and provided the opportunity for a fierce attack on the workers' standard of living. Formally the revolutionary British workers were obliged to submit to this decision, but in reality they should have revolted against it. During the prolonged lock-out of the British miners the Executive of the Miners' Federation possessed the formal right to refrain from calling on the miners to take more decisive action, the right to capitulate, but in reality such tactics led to defeat. From the formal point of view the miners should have submitted to the Executive, but in reality they ought to have revolted against it in order to save themselves and their families from starvation and to resist the onslaught of the enemy. At the beginning of the General Strike and miners' lock-out the correct united front tactic was to unite the workers in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, but what should have been the tactic of the supporters of the united front when the betrayal and the retreat began? Then the task consisted in a fierce attack on the traitors, their expulsion from the ranks of the working class, in order to preserve the fighting capacity of the army. During this struggle the Amsterdam leaders had the formal

right to stand aside and do nothing, and they took advantage of their formal right. But the Profintern was even more justified in standing aside and doing nothing, since the British unions did not belong to it. The Profintern, however, acted differently, and rendered real assistance through the revolutionary unions and principally through the unions of the U.S.S.R.

Let us examine the present conflict in the metal industry in Germany. In the formal sense the German metal workers' trade union is justified in agreeing to the arbitration decision, and the A.D.G.B., in view of the pending Reichstag elections has full power to sacrifice the metal workers, but in reality such procedure constitutes a most treacherous and criminal attitude to the workers. Of course, if we are to keep to the letter of the statutes, then the German metal workers had no right to strike against the consent of their own union, but in reality this is not only their right but their duty.

Under such circumstances what should be our united front policy? Our policy should be to unite the masses against the treachery of the leaders, in the metal worker's union and in the A.D.G.B., and to rally them for the struggle regardless of any formal regulations.

The Anglo-Russian Committee

This is the point of view from which the birth and death of the Anglo-Russian Committee should be considered. The Anglo-Russian Committee was an application of the united front tactic on a large scale. The Britishers interpreted the united front in the manner usual to the reformists, with the accepted stratagems and behind-the-scene transactions. If the revolutionary unions had understood the idea of the united front in this way they would not only have discredited themselves but the whole idea of the united front. The Soviet unions regarded the united front as a definite class task; therefore, when the General Council committed its well-known act of treachery, they came out into the open and said all they thought about behaviour of their partners. The social-democrats regarded the rupture of the Anglo-Russian Committee as a catastrophe for the Communists. And it must also be admitted that certain Communist circles also considered the rupture a defeat. But now it is clearer than ever who suffered defeat as a result of the rupture of the Anglo-Russian Committee. Let it suffice to recall the enormous power the General Council possessed in Great Britain before the rupture, and the position now; the General Council has compromised itself.

The rupture of the Anglo-Russian Committee was part and parcel of the new orientation of the British bourgeoisie. The General Council joined its own bourgeoisie in its revolt against Russia, and broke off relations with the Russian trade unions; it tried to establish connections with its own industrialists. The whole comedy of industrial peace is intended by Thomas and Co. as an attempt to restore its lost authority and popularity. Is it necessary to point out that the General Council will be still more compromised by such tactics? Is it necessary to prove that the comedy of industrial peace will have to be paid for dearly, by the General Council and the British workers?

An incorrect application of the tactic of the united front can cause very serious political complications. During the present elections in Japan the left Workers'

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and Peasants' Party entered into an agreement with the centrist and right parties to refrain from all criticism. Such agreements only bring discredit on the left which is what the right are out for. The greatest danger for the right wingers is not criticism from bourgeois circles but from the revolutionary workers. The greatest victory for the reformists would be to silence the revolutionary workers under the flag of the united front. Hence such agreements are merely playing into the hands of international and national reformism.

At the time when the final rupture of the Anglo-Russian Committee was being prepared, the Soviet trade unions established the united front with the trade unions in a number of countries on the Pacific Ocean, based on the creation of the Pacific Ocean Trade Union Secretariat. The Pacific Ocean Secretariat comprises the trade union movement in China, Korea, Japan, Australia, etc., and also represents a united front organisation, though differing in type from the Anglo-Russian Committee. The Anglo-Russian Committee was unable to carry on any sort of organisational or political activity because of the systematic sabotage of the Britishers, whereas the Pacific Ocean Secretariat carries on such work in spite of the fact that the affiliated unions include those belonging to the Profintern, the Amsterdam International and unions without any international affiliation.

Unlike the Anglo-Russian Committee this Secretariat has a more definite policy, more definite tactic, clearer aims and tasks. How can this be explained? By the fact that in the Anglo-Russian Committee we had the continuous opposition of British reformists, without any definiteness and certainty, whereas in the Pacific Ocean Secretariat every participant considers it necessary in view of the specific conditions on the Pacific to be absolutely definite as to aims and tasks. The Pacific Ocean Secretariat is not a new international, it is a special organ of the united front with the object of bringing about a united international.

Soviet-Scandinavian Committee

At the present time a Soviet-Norwegian-Finnish Committee and a number of separate Soviet-Scandinavian industrial committees are being formed. What is the object of this form of organisation? This is a new kind of united front for definite purposes. It is true that the Soviet-Norwegian-Finnish Committee is still in the process of formation, but it is perfectly clear that it will go further than the Anglo-Russian Committee did, because the Anglo-Russian Committee was very primitive from the organisational point of view. The new Committee of three will go further because the international position has become clearer and the differentiation within the international trade union movement has become much more developed. Now it is not possible to be limited by general forms. It is not only necessary to say definitely and clearly why the new committee has been formed, what it will do, whither it is going, what aims and tasks it sets itself, but it is essential to begin to realise these aims and tasks. In this respect the various Soviet-Scandinavian Committees have absolutely definite aims and tasks including the provision of mutual aid during strikes. This clear-cut programme denotes a great

advance on the conditions under which the Anglo-Russian Committee worked. The result of the struggle in connection with the Anglo-Russian Committee has been to establish greater clearness about unity.

In this connection the contemplated Latin-American Trade Union Secretariat is of great interest. This new association has not yet been formed organisationally, but the project is already very popular. It was inaugurated at a conference in November, 1927, in Moscow, which was attended by the trade union representatives of eight Latin-American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Columbia, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay, Venezuela, Chili), who signed the preliminary agreement. This agreement has already been made known in the Argentine and has aroused great enthusiasm on the one hand, but on the other great hatred. The President of the A.F. of L., William Green, was impelled to deliver an unctuous speech at the Pan-American Conference simply because he fears for the existence of the Pan-American Federation of Labour. He knows that the workers' movement in Latin America does not want to have anything to do with the Pan-American Federation of Labour because it is the avowed tool of American imperialism. And thus we have this Wail Street shopman frightened into making liberal speeches, and playing an anti-imperialist comedy, because he fears the new organisation will combine the workers' movement in Latin America against American imperialism.

As far as it is possible to judge at present the Secretariat of the Latin-American countries will also be a united front organ. In view of the peculiar situation in Latin America it should occupy a definitely anti-imperialist position, and on the other hand without assuming the role of an international it should carry on the struggle for a united all-embracing trade union international. Here again this new united front organ, because of its special type, its extent and the definite nature of its tasks denotes an advance in comparison with the Anglo-Russian Committee. But both the Pacific Ocean Secretariat and the Latin American Secretariat were made possible through our united front tactic, and especially through the existence of the Anglo-Russian Committee.

Experience Brings New Forms of Organisation

Thus we see that after the breakdown of the Anglo-Russian Committee all newly-formed united front organs represent a higher form of the united front tactic and moreover this movement has spread far beyond the boundaries of Europe and embraces the workers' movement of the whole world.

The forms and methods of the united front struggle depend first of all on the degree of organisation of the workers, on the nature and peculiarities of the Labour movement in the given country and the correlation of forces between the revolutionary and the reformist wings of the Labour movement. In this respect the United States of America is especially interesting. Only 10 per cent. of the workers are organised. A whole series of branches of industries, such as the steel, automobile, rubber and chemical are scarcely organised or absolutely unorganised. On the other hand many of the big unions, such as for instance, the miners, are in process of dissolution and we may be faced with the question of what we can do. If we were to misinterpret the tactic of

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the united front, we might say that all our activity should be confined within the limits of the A.F. of L., and the unions affiliated, but that would be a huge mistake. We have had quite a wealth of unhappy experience in the U.S.A., and this experience should be taken into account. In 1926 there was the Passaic strike which lasted several months. Thanks to the activities of the revolutionary workers, a textile union was formed, with a membership of 15,000. But then our comrades, from a false notion of the united front tactic, declared that this union must join the textile federation which is affiliated to the A.F. of L. The federation demanded that the Communist leadership resign, and our comrades assented to this. The following result was obtained: the textile workers lost the strike, the Communists lost the leadership, the workers left the union and instead of 15,000 workers, there remained only 700, but added to this the reactionary unions gained a new centre for their organisation and the principle of unity was realised! Such is the amusing spectacle of attempts to carry out this suicidal policy. ;

A second example is the split which is taking place in the miners' union. This union during the past three years has lost 350,000 members. The majority of the miners are unorganised. And our comrades instead of forming new unions in those districts where the workers are without organisations, spend their time abusing that double-dealer Lewis, and repeating incessantly phrases about being opposed to parallel unions, etc. And whilst this is happening the miners' union is going to pieces!

Work for American C.P.

Our American comrades promise that they will proceed to organise the workers in those branches of industry which are poorly organised, or completely unorganised, but so far the business has not been begun. What is keeping our comrades from beginning this work? First of all an incorrect interpretation of the united front policy and a fear of organising the masses. But we can only become strong through organising the masses, and not by dancing a quadrille the whole time around the A.F. of L. and its various unions. The situation in America is such that it is necessary to form unions in all those branches of industry where there is either no organisation or where what exists is practically negligible. Unions must be organised in those branches of industry where the unions are breaking up because of the tactic of the trade union bureaucrats. A stop must be put to this dancing around the A.F. of L. which only comprises 10 per cent. of the workers, and it must be understood that a refusal to organise the masses for the sake of a formal principle of unity strikes at the very basis of Bolshevik tactics.

The question arises whether the slogan of the united front does not contradict the slogan of organising the unorganised, which in some countries is strangely interpreted. For example, in the U.S.A., the Workers' Party and the Trade Union Educational League approach the A.F. of L. with the request "to organise the unorganised"! It is absolutely nonsensical to ask the corrupt A.F. of L. leaders to organise the unorganised. We ought to organise the unorganised ourselves, we ought to unite them, and not turn to the A.F. of L.

with such requests. The request is being sent to the wrong address! Just in the same way the newly-coined slogan in America: "Save the Unions" is being sent to the wrong address. What does the slogan "Save the Unions" mean in America? To whom should this slogan be addressed? To the A.F. of L.? Our comrades are the victims of a metaphysical interpretation of the united front and unity. The unions in America can only be saved by driving all the corrupt, useless, strike-breaking lackeys of Wall Street out of the workers' movement. Can the A.F. of L. do this? Of course, not. Therefore such a slogan as "Save the Unions" is out of place. It does not say anything, it confuses the issue, it distracts the workers' attention from important questions, it sows the illusion that the present A.F. of L. is an advantage for the American workers. Where did this slogan suddenly come from? It is a desperate slogan arising from an over-valuation of the importance of the Fascist A.F. of L. and the misinterpretation of the tactic of the united front.

The united front tactic does not imply that we should always defer to the leaders of the reformist trade unions with requests to organise the unorganised, save the unions, lead strikes, etc. Such tactics are fruitless, harmful and delusive. All such demands should be made to ourselves and not to our enemies. We should approach the masses with these demands, we should organise the unorganised ourselves, we should start unions where none exist and where they are splitting up as a result of the reformist bureaucrats. We should say to the workers: "drive these Wall Street lackeys and tools out of the unions and then you save the unions."

The French Position

Whilst the question of the formation of new unions should be considered in the U.S.A., the position is quite different in those countries where the trade union movement is split. Let us take France, for example, where there are 90 per cent. unorganised, and only 10 per cent. organised in the two federations. It is quite clear that the main thing to be done here is to attract the unorganised workers to the revolutionary federation. The greater the number of workers we secure for the revolutionary unions the simpler the problem of unity in France. This question of unity does not demand that we rack our brains from morning till night about the mutual relations between the existing reformist and revolutionary unions. This does not constitute the real point at issue; the unorganised workers are the most important. Organise millions of workers in the revolutionary unitarian unions, and then the whole situation will right itself.

In France the united front often becomes a kind of sport. There is a lot of talk about it, but little is done. The only thing to be done here is to go on organising fresh groups of workers. The balance of forces is not by any means in favour of the reformists in France. In certain unions the unitarians are in the majority. Not long ago elections took place in the railway workers' union, and the Unitarian trade unions secured 131 mandates, the reformists 45 and the Catholic unions and others 20. This result gives the Unitarians twice as many mandates as the other two put together, whilst the position when compared with the reformists

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alone is still more favourable; 75 per cent. for us and only 25 per cent. for the reformists.

When the correlation of forces is such, on what should be concentrate chiefly? We should secure the largest possible number of railway workers for the Unitarian union, both those who are not organised and those who are in the reformist unions. In France unity is to be attained within the ranks of the unitarian railway workers' unions, and the greatest energy and determination should be brought to bear on this task.

The unity of the trade union movement in France is dependent mainly on the question whether the unitarian unions are capable of organising within their ranks hundreds, thousands and millions of workers. And in this connection the point arises how this should be accomplished? If the masses are to be attracted to the Unitarian unions a thorough examination of the entire system and methods of the unitarian unions is necessary. These unions have remained more or less stationary; and the number of members is on the decline, in some of them, such as the big federations of miners, textile and metal workers' unions. Such a state of affairs is extremely dangerous, especially since the falling off is taking place in the basic branches of industry. A thorough revision from top to bottom of the organisational structure should be made, to discover any weak spots, so that through a policy of economic and organisational struggle greater masses of workers can be organised within the Unitarian unions.

Misunderstood Tactics

As I already pointed out the united front has many peculiarities in those countries where the movement is split. Here, too, the tactic of the united front is often misunderstood. Czecho-Slovakia, for example, provides numerous instances of how not to establish the united front. In 1926, the left National Socialist group joined the Communist Party. This group had the leadership of a small miners' union of 5,000 members. When this group joined the Party the question of the leadership of this union should have been attended to, and it should have been amalgamated with the miners' section of the International Federation of Trade Unions. But our Czech comrades remained inactive and the union was left independent so that now as far as can be judged, elements hostile to the international federation and the Communists have got the upper hand.

There have been instances in Czecho-Slovakia when Communists in reformist trade unions voted for the Amsterdam candidates, and called on others to do likewise, in opposition to the Red trade union candidates. This was done in the name of unity, whereas it was nothing but the most blatant opportunism. It is true that the situation in Czecho-Slovakia is extremely difficult, because the Red trade unions only comprise one-fifth of the workers organised in trade unions. Communists have the leadership in the Red trade unions, and have influence within the reformist unions, but this influence is badly organised. This arises from an incorrect attitude which might be formulated thus: "If we are too firmly organised and united within the reformist unions, then the reformists would split the union, and since we are out for unity it is better to

organise only political influence, and not strengthen it organisationally." The reformists take advantage of this attitude and hamper the activity of the Communists in every possible way. They understand only too well those who are out for unity at all costs and under any conditions are no danger whatsoever to the reformist leadership. This kind of distorted policy pervades the entire revolutionary trade union movement in Czecho-Slovakia. We are faced with a situation in which the Red trade unions do not develop, nor does influence increase in the reformist trade unions and all the while the influence of the Communist Party is growing. Every time when we enquire into the gap between the growing influence of the Communist Party and the stationary condition of our influence in the trade unions, we are up against the fact that the united front tactic are incorrectly carried out.

The Independent Unions

In some countries the incorrect application of the united front tactic and unity is the cause of crises both in the trade unions and the Communist Parties. To this type belong such countries as Yugoslavia and Roumania. Here more than anywhere independent unions spring up as a result of the split policy of the social-democrats and the provocative measures of the Amsterdam-police bloc. In these countries the most important thing is to strengthen the left unions and extend and develop their work. This work of strengthening the left unions should be carried on simultaneously both amongst the unorganised workers and the reactionary unions where the leaders only maintain their position by the assistance of the police. But instead of such activity in these countries we meet with endless discussions on whether the left unions should be strengthened at the expense of the reformist unions, should independent unions be formed and such like. All such discussions are mere waste of time and a proof of passivity and tiredness in the struggle against the united bloc of the reformists and the police.

It is no mere chance that in Yugoslavia and Roumania liquidatory tendencies have been especially strong. It was in these countries that the theory was repeatedly discussed as to whether the independent unions should not be liquidated in the name of unity (!), unity at any price. The flag of unity in these countries serves as a screen for the most commonplace liquidation, both of the independent unions and the Communist Party and the Comintern. Nor was it a mere chance that the majority of the supporters of unity went over into the camp of their class enemies. Wherever the reformist-police bloc stands firm against the independent unions we should consider it the most important task to strengthen the independent unions, both by organising the unorganised and at the expense of the reformist unions. The most important task in those countries is to cease playing about with the metaphysical interpretation of the united front tactic: there must be less discussion, less talk about unity and more practical work for real unity and the rallying of the working class forces into the ranks of the independent unions and therewith the establishment of the unity of the workers in the daily and general struggle.

The misinterpretation of the united front tactic often prevents the most elementary work being done for

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joint action of all left unions. A typical example in this respect may be found in Mexico where there is a general trade union centre and a number of independent trade unions. The Federation of Labour has a membership of about 600,000, consisting mainly of agricultural labourers and peasants. Outside the federation there are the railway workers, the miners, the workers in the oil industry, that is to say, the workers in all the basic branches of industry. Besides there are several local unions and district bodies which object to joining the Federation of Labour. One would suppose that the most elementary task would be to unite all these various unions, especially since they comprise about 150,000 workers, but in reality this meets with all kinds of obstacles. First of all the local bodies prevent such unity, for some union or other is under their influence. But this might be overcome if there were not some comrades who think that from the point of view of unity it would not do to form a new centre, since the Federation of Labour is already in existence. But which is better? One general trade union centre and dozens of autonomous unions, or two centres which would unite all the autonomous unions? From the point of view of the struggle for unity the first, of course, is better. The fewer centres, the easier will be the formation of a united trade union organisation in the given country. But to refuse to unite the independent unions out of considerations of unity, seems to be a wrong application of the correct tactic of the united front.

Less Abstract Talk

In carrying out the tactic of the united front, what is of special importance in order to attract the masses of the workers? It is necessary to stop all abstract, metaphysical talk about the united front and have done once and for all with the tactic of unity for the sake of unity. It is necessary to remember that the task of the united front is the winning of the masses for an active class policy. Therefore, the main attention should be centred around the question of the united front and unity from below, that is in factories and mills and in the lower trade union organisations. The nearer we are to the masses the less place there will be for metaphysics. Workers are not interested in the general beauty of the united front, not in unity in itself, but in joint action for the attainment of definite aims and tasks. They want to get through the united front real advantages and our work among the masses should be carried out in such a way that the advantages of the united front stand out clearly. Increased activity for the united front and unity implies a programme of concrete demands. Our point of departure for the united front should be the everyday demands of the workers and not the reverse.

All our work among the masses is bound up with the united front tactic. There are certain comrades who think that our work in the trade unions should consist mainly in going one better in our demands than the reformists. And, therefore, many comrades, who overthrow imperialism every day, flay fascism and reaction and are most energetic in their defence of Soviet Russia and the Chinese revolution, pale and are silent and even

join in with the reformists when simple everyday questions arise. What is the use of worrying about the details of collective agreements, communal restaurants, creches, social insurance, the purchase of cheap goods for the workers, etc., when the fall of capitalism is not far off? The result of this "clever" tactic is indifference and distrust on the part of the workers. It is time to leave revolutionary phrases and learn not only to be the first at the barricades, but also in everyday, practical work. It is not possible to win the working masses at a bound with only a bare slogan in our hands, we must win them in a systematic manner, step by step, never forgetting that the united front and unity are not the aim in view, but only the means to an end.

The Struggle for the Masses

Above all the united front and unity are struggle for the masses and only from this point of view should we approach this question. This means that in every given case, in every proposal for the united front it is necessary, first of all, to consider how the question affects the masses. And above all we should remember that the united front is not a game and that we must count on the rank and file and not on the leaders. (This does not exclude possible discussions and the formation of unity organisations from above—and even here the most important thing is to attract the masses to active, political participation in the tasks undertaken by the new united front organs.) On the other hand we must avoid the mechanical application of the united front. What has been done in this direction in one country (mixed committees, committees of action, etc.), cannot be applied in another country. Furthermore, the forms and methods of the united front do not only change in every country, but in various industries and districts. It is one thing to have to do with a country where the trade union movement is legal (England, Germany, Belgium, etc.), or in countries where the trade union movement is legal though split (France, Czechoslovakia), but quite a different matter where the trade union movement is illegal (Italy), or in countries where it is semi-legal and split up (Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Roumania, etc.). The differences become still greater if we go beyond the boundaries of Europe, North or South America, Japan, China, India, Indonesia, Africa, etc. In such countries there is not only a division on political grounds, but also on race grounds; this fact forces us to reject any hard and fast methods as regards the united front tactic and unity.

One Aim—Different Tactics

No matter what difference there may be in the application of the tactic of the united front the aim must be the same everywhere, viz. to win the masses. If all revolutionary trade unions would concentrate all their attention on this side and if all practical, everyday work were carried on from this point of view, then we would speed up considerably the attainment of both national and international trade union unity. The quicker our growth the stronger we shall become in comparison with the reformists, the sooner we attain unity. This is what every revolutionary worker and every adherent of the Profintern should know and remember.

Organisation Work in the Y.C.L. and the Task of the Communist Parties

Vasiliev

IN every capitalist country the Communist Party is now making the tasks of organisational consolidation of its growing ideological influence among the broad proletarian masses, and the organisational preparation for the oncoming (and in part already beginning) great struggles with the enemies of the proletariat, the centre of its practical activities. This is absolutely sound. The recent Plenums of the Comintern Executive Committee during their consideration of problems of the general policy and strategy of the Communist Parties, and the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. in all their decisions on questions affecting individual sections systematically emphasise the inadequacy of the organisational work of the Communist Parties in capitalist countries, and the necessity of strengthening that work by every means. There have even been worked out certain general plans for the arrangement of the most important organisational tasks of the Communist Parties in the immediate future: the conquest of the large enterprises, the strengthening of the factory nuclei, the intensification of work in trade unions, a more energetic numerical growth and so on. To these organisational tasks, which for the immediate future must remain among the central tasks of the Communist Parties, must be added all-round assistance in the organisational work of the Young Communist Leagues, as being also one of the central tasks.

Weakness of the Leagues

We must frankly admit that the situation in the Young Communist Leagues of capitalist countries is not rosy. The bourgeois press howls at the top of its voice that the Communists are demoralising the youth. This is an old trick of professional rogues, who cry "Stop thief!" the loudest in order to divert attention from their own abominable crimes. The bourgeoisie is making gigantic efforts and recently has expended very large sums in order to draw the proletarian youth away from "politics." Every conceivable method is resorted to by them. Sermons and all the other tricks of the "servants of God," who with the aid of confession succeed in extorting the most secret thoughts of the "erring sons"; sports recreations at the cost of the employers for those on whom the "sacred words" have no effect, with time off from work during sports competitions, and free or the cheap supply of the necessary sports equipment; the cinema, theatre, and literature, working on the imagination of the youth in the definite direction necessary to the bourgeoisie, plus wine and such auxiliaries complete this intellectual moulding of the young generation. In application to the Communist youth organisations there is also brought into action the apparatus of unrestrained repression on the part of the government and the bourgeoisie itself. As we know, in the eyes of the police and the fascists of all capitalist countries the young revolutionary Communist organisations are regarded as most dangerous to the capitalist system, and they are not sparing in their methods; they do not hang back be-

fore the restoration of mediæval tortures (as in Bulgaria, Korea, Yugo-Slavia, Poland, Roumania and so on) in order to break up the young Communist organisations and frighten the mass of working youth from participation in the revolutionary political struggle. The entire responsibility for the work of intellectual and political corruption of the proletarian youth falls on the bourgeoisie, the ruling classes and their willing and unwilling assistants in the Second and the Amsterdam Internationals.

In regard to the work among the youth the Communist Parties are guilty of another fault, and that fault has to be openly called by its real name.

Neglect by the Parties

That fault is unquestionably an inadequate attention to the problems of work among the working youth, and inadequate assistance to the organisation of the Young Communists. A convincing illustration, which reveals and proves this inadequate attention on the part of the Communist Parties to the problems of work among the proletarian youth, is provided by the position in Czecho-Slovakia. While the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia numbers more than one hundred thousand members, the Communist League of Youth of Czecho-Slovakia numbers only 13,000 members altogether. In the Czecho-Slovakian enterprises there are large party nuclei with a hundred, two hundred and even more members, while in the Czecho-Slovakian League of Youth there are altogether only thirty anæmic, numerically small factory nuclei in the whole country. It is quite evident that if in Czecho-Slovakia we have such a situation that there are numerically large party nuclei in a factory while a Young Communist nucleus either does not exist at all, or at the utmost is numbered in ones and twos, and plays no role whatever among the unorganised working youth in the factory, the chief and the direct responsibility for this weakness of the Young Communist organisations lies on the Communist Party in the first place, and in this particular instance on the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia. In other capitalist countries we do not have such a glaring contrast between the state of affairs in the party and the condition of the Young Communist organisations as we have in Czecho-Slovakia. But in every capitalist country without exception the Young Communist organisations are numerically much weaker than those of the Party. As is well known, in the U.S.S.R. the Young Communists are numerically much larger than the Party. At the Fifteenth Party Congress there were 1,200,000 members and candidates of the C.P.S.U., while the Russian Leninist Y.C.L. numbered 2,500,000 members.

The fundamental cause of the insufficiently attentive or absolutely inattentive attitude on the part of the Communist Parties to problems of work among the proletarian youth are chiefly to be sought in the underestimation of the enormous political significance of this

Organisational Work in Y.C.L.—continued

work. Even up to the present time, and among responsible workers in the Communist Parties, the opinion can be heard that work among the proletarian youth is the business of the Young Communist League, and not of the Party. This is an expressly shortsighted view and very dangerous from the point of view of the most essential interests of the proletarian class struggle.

Rationalisation—the replacement of the labour of the qualified worker by the labour of the unskilled worker fulfilling the simplest of functions in attendance on automatic machinery—has extraordinarily increased the application of juvenile labour in industry. And the more so since as a rule the juveniles are more capable of learning the operation of the machinery, while under the conditions of bourgeois society their labour is lower paid than that of adult men and women.

In the foremost capitalist countries at the present time the juveniles are playing an important role in the process of production in large, rationalised enterprises. In this regard the example of one German factory is typical. Here in 1927 the juvenile workers drew up their demands and organised a strike. The strike was supported by the adult workers and consequently the strike was won.

“Workers’ Sports”

The great (also “rationalised”) bourgeoisie are carrying on an enormous activity among the juveniles. It is sufficient merely to mention the “workers’ sports,” where the employers, who are at the same time making an attack on the eight-hour day and the workers’ wages, are assigning comparatively large sums for the equipment of sports grounds attached to their enterprises, and for the purpose of sports equipment for free distribution to their workers (which are used almost exclusively by the working youth) are hiring special trainers for the free instruction of their workers in all kinds of sports and so on. The socialists and trade union reformist leaders are also developing great activity in regard to sports which draw away the workers from the problems of the class struggle, while on the other hand statistics of the juveniles organised in trade unions are often even non-existent, thus illustrating the extremely miserable situation in regard to this question. And into whose hands is all this playing? The most hostile enemies of the proletariat, of course. The proletariat and its advance-guard—its Communist Parties—are deeply interested in drawing the working youth into the struggle being developed by the factory Party nuclei, and also in seeing that the youth should be in the ranks of the trade union army, that they should be fighters for the revolutionary unity of the proletariat against the social-democratic leaders, that they should be soldiers in the great army of labour, insurgent against the domination of capital.

Taking all this into account, every Communist Party should place among its most important, least to be forgotten, front rank tasks that of everyday, systematic, attentive, patient and businesslike assistance to the corresponding Young Communist organisation.

Secondly, independent of the question how the Young Communist organisation works (and so much the more when the Young Communist organisation does

not exist at all, or is at the most extremely weak) every Party organisation should, in the area of its activities, count among its main tasks for the immediate future the task of ordering the work among the working youth, and drawing the juvenile workers into the revolutionary class struggle.

Thirdly, the central points of the Communist Parties’ work are the enterprise and the trade union. Consequently, especially close attention to the question of the correct ordering of work among the working youth must be demanded from the factory nuclei and the trade union fractions, and in particular from the fraction of the factory committee, as being the local trade union organ working at the enterprise itself.

Factory and Trade Union Organisation

When we attempt to analyse the condition of the Young Communist organisations in various capitalist countries with a view to establishing what link in these organisations is the weakest and where help is most needed, we find that the weakest links are the most important, the fundamental links on which the whole chain depends. The factory nucleus and the trade union fractions, in other words. In accordance with the decisions of the Second International Organisational Conference which established the rules of work of the trade union Communist fractions, the members of the Young Communist League working in the trade unions must belong to the general Party fractional organisation. Despite the fact that in accordance with these decisions the trade union Communist fractions should have taken very much to heart the interests of the work among the working youth, the position in regard to work carried on by the trade union Communist fractions among the working youth is extremely bad in all capitalist countries without exception. It may be said without exaggeration that as a rule the trade union Communist fractions have not carried on any work among the juvenile workers; they have had no programme of immediate demands for the working youth, nor have they even troubled to think of working out such a programme.

The position in regard to assistance and care for the Young Communist work in the enterprises on the part of the factory nuclei is very little better, (even when these nuclei are numerically quite strong, as in Czecho-Slovakia, for example).

With such a condition of things it is not surprising that the trade union fractions have no link whatever with the working youth, nor that the reorganisation of the Young Communist organisations on the basis of factory nuclei is going on extraordinarily slowly and altogether unhealthily. As an indication of the state of things in regard to factory nuclei in the Young Communist League the following summary of figures from the Organisation Department of the Young Communist International, showing the number of factory nuclei among Young Communists in the most important capitalist countries at the end of 1927, are eloquent: Germany 125; France 10; Italy 52; Britain 3; Czecho-Slovakia 30; Sweden (with 12,000 members) 3; and in the United States, not one.

It would be quite unsound to presume that the weakness of the Young Communist organisation is explained merely by the Party’s inadequate attention

Organisational Work in Y.C.L.—continued

to their work. The Young Communists themselves should for their part carefully consider the methods of their work. First and foremost they must consider their methods of work in the enterprises, and must analyse the causes for the weakness of their factory nuclei. The Young Communists themselves at first explained the weakness of their factory nuclei as due to the reorganisation of the youth leagues on the basis of factory nuclei being carried through by mechanical methods. This defect in the reorganisation of the Young Communists on the basis of factory nuclei certainly did exist and to quite a considerable extent. But all this concerns only the past. Meantime the statistics of the Organisation Department of the Young Communist International register a continuation in the decline of the numbers of factory nuclei in 1927 also, i.e., after the directing organisation of the Y.C.I. had several times condemned the mechanical methods of reconstructing the Young Communist organisations.

Thus it would be unsound to explain the weakness of the factory nuclei of the Young Communists only or mainly by the mechanical methods of reorganisation; it would also be unsound to explain the lack of success with the factory nuclei by reference to police and employers' repression. Of course, repression makes the development of the Young Communists' work in the enterprises very difficult. But here, for example, is the testimony of the figures in regard to the position of nuclei in countries where the Young Communist organisations are legal compared with those where they are illegal. In Italy with a raging fascist terror the Young Communists had 52 factory nuclei in 1927, while in France where the police regime was considerably lighter, there were only ten.

Present Methods Wrong

It seems to us that we have to seek the basic causes of this miserable position in regard to factory nuclei in Young Communist organisations not so much in the methods of the organisation already carried through as in the present methods of work. And it seems to us that this question must be connected with the problem of fluctuations in the Young Communist organisations. The trouble of the Young Communist Leagues consists not only in the weakness of the factory nuclei and the feeble growth of new members, but also in the fact that there is a very great fluctuation. The Organisation Department of the Y.C.I. also gives approximate figures on the fluctuations in the most important Young Communist organisations during 1927: France 40 per cent.; Czecho-Slovakia 35.4 per cent.; Britain (the middle of 1927) 120 per cent. After discounting the number of old members of the League the Berlin-Brandenburg organisation provides the following very indicative approximate curve of fluctuation: before 1918, 0.5 per cent.; 1923, 14 per cent.; 1925, 17 per cent.; 1926, 38 per cent.; 1927 (May), 30 per cent. In other words, by comparison with the previous years the last two years of 1926 and 1927 show a large increase in the fluctuation. The error of a mechanical approach to the question of reorganisation was revealed in 1925 and 1926, yet 1926-27 shows no diminution in the fluctuation.

What is Wrong?

What does a large fluctuation in an organisation signify? It signifies that the internal life of the organisation does not satisfy its members, that a large number of the members of the Young Communist organisations (and in certain cases the majority of members) do not find what they hoped to find in the Young Communist organisations. There may be two reasons for this: first, the weakness of the internal life in the local Young Communist organisations; as a rule the rank and file members of the organisation take on no League obligations beyond the payment of membership fees, and as a result they come to consider their further membership of the League as pointless: second, there may be a certain life in the local Communist youth organisations, the mass of rank and file members of the League organisations may take on a certain part of the load of League obligations, but the nature of this burden does not satisfy a large part of the members.

We are of the opinion that both these defects are present in the Young Communist organisations of the present day and that the overcoming of these defects is the most important task of every Young Communist organisation at the moment.

One must begin, of course, with the intrinsic content of the work carried on by the Young Communist organisations. That is the most important of all: on the nature and dimensions of the tasks depend both the question of how their execution has to be organised in practice and that of how the mass of the League members are to be drawn into this work.

Many comrades reproach the Young Communist organisations with excessive seriousness and regard for politics. They consider that by the very reason of the peculiarities of their age the mass of young workers cannot be restrained within the present-day Young Communist Leagues, which strive to copy the Party in every way, and which consequently must be relieved of politics and as a counterweight must enter more into sport and other less political and more recreational matters. There is a certain grain of truth in this declaration, but only a certain grain, and that grain the kind which characterises erroneous declarations.

In approaching the solution of this problem it must first of all not be forgotten that during the history of the last few years of the International Communist movement the Young Communists have in a number of countries acted side by side with the Comintern in a resolute struggle against the opportunist deviations of their own Communist Parties, and in this direction it has to be said without any exaggeration that they have proved of great service to the Comintern. For recent examples one has only to point to the role of the Chinese and Belgian Young Communist Leagues in the struggle with opportunist deviations in the ranks of the corresponding Communist Parties. It is a fact that in the struggle with the Trotskyist Opposition and in the struggle with other ultra-left and right wing errors in the ranks of the Communist Parties, the Young Communist League has of recent years always been among the first to answer the call of the C.I., and in every country has stood by Leninist unity and the revolutionary political bearing of the Communist ranks with great determination. May one, and need one say that in the future the Young Communist League will not waver in that struggle?

Organisational Work in Y.C.L.—continued

Or take another example. Again the first to respond in every country to the struggle against the war danger now arising was the Young Communist League. In every country it was the Young Communists who gave and are still giving the finest example of work among soldiers. Need one say that in the future also the Young Communists will continue their anti-militarist work? The very suggestion that they will not is absurd.

The Main Defect

We think that in regard to the participation in the general revolutionary struggle of the proletariat the fundamental defect of the Young Communists consists not in their being too occupied with politics, but in the fact that they participate in the political struggle only fortuitously, that the Party does not draw them into a systematic political struggle, taking into account the peculiarities of the Young Communist organisation and the special tasks which it can systematically fulfil in the class struggle of the proletariat. Here we again come up against the inadequate connection between the work of the Party and the Young Communist organisations.

It is quite evident that the Young Communist Leagues are and should be political organisations of the working youth. The abstraction of the Young Communist from the political struggle must inevitably (it has been so and it will be so) bring with it unhealthy symptoms inside the Young Communist organisations—individual cases of advance-guardism, the transfer of the best part of the Young Communists into the Party, and so on.

It is especially important that the question of the Young Communist participation in the political struggle of the proletariat should be raised in correct relation to the work of the Young Communists in the enterprises and the trade unions. In regard to work in the enterprises the first and most important point to be established is that there cannot be an active and vital factory nucleus if that nucleus has no concrete tasks connected with the everyday struggle of the proletariat for its essential demands. The present moment is very favourable to the achievement of this. The attack of capital and the growing resistance of the proletariat, the strikes that have taken place recently, and so on, raise before every conscious adult and juvenile worker in the factory a number of highly important practical tasks for the establishment of centres of resistance (strike committees and so on) for the working out of a programme of demands and a tactic of the struggle for their realisation, for the strengthening of the trade union organs, for the driving out of the reformists, and other social traitors from the trade unions, for the struggle with strike-breaking and provocation, for the distribution of the necessary literature, and similar activities.

In order to resolve the problem of strengthening the factory nuclei, the Young Communist organisations must concentrate all their attention on the tasks of intensifying the work at the enterprises by drawing the working youth into assistance in the practical resolution of all those burning questions which bind the proletariat with the general struggle against the attack of capital, against capitalistic rationalisation, and against the attempts of social-democracy to hinder the growing

revolutionary struggle. And here there must be the closest connection and mutual aid between the Party and the Young Communist organisations. Simultaneously the Young Communists must face up to the problem of their participation and serious work in the trade union sphere.

Reorganise

A second pre-requisite for the strengthening of the factory nuclei of the Young Communists is the introduction of a number of measures of an organisational character. The most important of these is that the most serious attention must be given to the improvement of the work of the already existing local organisations (town, village, etc.). What does this mean in practice? It means the strengthening of the committees of the local organisations and the strengthening of the link between these committees and the nuclei, and in general with the entire mass of members of the League's local organisations on the basis of the consolidation of internal League democracy.

If the factory nuclei are working only feebly, if all the work carried on in the enterprises and for the penetration of the enterprises is in an unsatisfactory state, and the question rises of the practical strengthening of these forms of League activity, it obviously can have only the following meaning. The actual members of the local League organisations must somehow reconstruct their ranks, concentrating their efforts around the largest enterprises with a view to assisting the nuclei and the individual members of the League already in them; the factory nuclei themselves must in turn receive new instructions how to organise and develop their work better than before. All this is the obligation of the committees of the local organisations. If the work of individual members and nuclei composing the local organisations is in need of serious adjustments and a general strengthening on a large scale, it means that hitherto the committees of the local organisations have not been equal to their tasks, it means that they are in need of strengthening, and in need of strengthening their link with and direction of the every-day work of the factory nuclei. How are the committees of the local organisations to be strengthened, taking into account the weakness of the directing groups of the local organisations? First and foremost these groups must be re-examined. It may be possible to effect some expedient re-adjustments of the workers on the spot. The Local Party Committee **must** also take an extremely active part in the speedier practical resolution of this problem and in case of necessity **must** (for the safeguarding of the essential interests of Party work) put forward one (or possibly more) Party workers, for the purpose of establishing able and politically determinate local committees for the Young Communist organisations. In addition the questions must be raised of the practical measures to be undertaken for bringing the work of the local committees closer to the mass of members of the local organisations and factory nuclei. As an example of the various practical measures possible in this direction one may point to the organisation of systematic conferences of the nuclei active workers under the guidance of responsible representatives of the committees of the local organisations. Such conferences should have the task of working out practical measures for bringing

Organisational Work in Y.C.L.—continued

into force all the major questions of Young Communist work. Particular attention must be directed to the elimination of errors in the work of the local Young Communist organisations, and to working out sound methods of intensive work in the enterprises and the unions. These conferences will bring the committees into closer touch with the active workers of the local organisations, will allow a swift checking up of the methods of work being applied, and the soundness of the given instructions, etc. On the other hand, in the process of practical consideration of various problems arising out of the every-day work of the local organisations these conferences will assist in the advancing of fresh active workers for responsible work, and in checking up on workers so advanced. In addition to these conferences with active workers it is necessary to introduce regular general and delegate meetings of members—meetings which already have a decisive character. Finally, in order to strengthen the guidance of the every-day work of the factory nuclei and in general of the work in the enterprises it would seem necessary (or in any case will be very shortly) that the comrades responsible for the work of Young Communists in the enterprises should have daily contact with the responsible representatives of the committee of the local organisation, who should inform him of the latest events in the enterprise and together with him, should consider what concrete measures are to be undertaken for the strengthening of the work.

Developing Initiative

One of the most important tasks of the conferences of active workers and the daily instruction of the factory nuclei must be care for heightening the initiative of the local Young Communist active group, for developing the ability to orientate swiftly in the given circumstances, so that without waiting for special instructions from the committee they should be able together with the Party comrades to organise the necessary steps to be taken. Parallel with the work for strengthening the committees of the local organisations should be carried on work for the strengthening of the directing group inside the factory nuclei, and this work should be carried on on the basis of a sound division of labour among the members of the nuclei, the drawing of all members of the nuclei into active work, and also by means of a systematic drawing in of the closest sympathisers into the execution of separate tasks and the consideration of certain questions, thus ensuring that these latter will be educated in practice into becoming active Young Communist workers.

As at the present time the majority of members of the Young Communist organisations are not members of the factory nuclei the task consists in making those of them who are workers in enterprises the actual centre for the work of the Young Communist organisation in these enterprises. If the situation is such that there are workers at petty enterprises when there are no links whatever with large enterprises, these comrades must be transferred to work in the large enterprises, or must be organised as a committee in a corresponding temporary group (concentration nuclei) having as its special task the establishment of a factory nucleus at a certain

factory. The remaining members of the organisation, who cannot be included in factory nuclei, must be organised in street nuclei, which it is necessary to build up in the Young Communist organisations just as much as in the Party, on the basis of the corresponding decisions of the second international conference.

Work among Sympathisers

Finally, it is necessary to indicate also the task of work among those sympathetic to the Young Communist League, as being an organisational work of first-rate importance in the question of the organisational consolidation of the Young Communist organisations. Right down to the present time this work has been given no serious attention whatever in the Young Communist League, while it is clear without need of special arguments that this work for the systematic strengthening of influence among wide masses of working youth who for some reason or other do not wish to join the Young Communists, but who are sympathetic and are ready to participate in various campaigns and activities carried on by the Young Communists, is of extreme importance.

Young Communist activities in sports organisations must justly be regarded as a specific Young Communist task of special importance. This work has great significance in the general field of the proletariat's revolutionary class struggle. Hundreds of thousands and millions of proletarian and semi-proletarian elements are federated in all kinds of sports organisations which are under the control of bourgeois and socialistic politicians. Of recent years the "rationalised," i.e., the most dangerous section of the bourgeoisie is carrying on energetic work for the establishment of their own so-called works sports, with their aid endeavouring on the one hand to draw the mass of the proletariat (and the working youth in the first place) away from the tasks of the revolutionary struggle, and on the other hand endeavouring to exploit sport as a means of inculcating the ideas of fascism in the mass of the proletariat and the mobilisation of those yielding to these ideas in militant fascist organisations. One must not close one's eyes to the fact that works sports have already met with some success in this direction. Those successes are not large at present, but they do exist and they are facts calling for stern resistance on the part of the class-conscious proletariat. On the Young Communists falls the honour of bearing responsibility for the basic operations which have to be developed in this section of the revolutionary proletarian front.

It is not possible for us to give special consideration to the tasks of the Young Communists in sports organisations in this article. But we consider it necessary here to emphasise the great political significance of this work and that the Young Communists must consider it as such, as a big piece of political work. The fundamental idea underlying this work consists in two highly important tasks.

The political demoralisation of the sports organisations in the hands of the bourgeoisie and socialists, the unmasking of the counter-revolutionary, anti-proletarian plans which the leaders of these organisations dress up under the guise of "non-political" talks on football, cycle-racing, swimming, and so on; the unmasking of the fascist instructors, who are working as sports specialists in these organisations; the most resolute

Organisational Work in Y.C.L.—continued

struggle for the immediate elimination of such leaders and such instructors; the struggle for the democratisation of sports organisations, and for the establishment of their closest connection with the revolutionary class organisations of the proletariat. In regard to the proletarian sports organisations under the influence of the reformists we have the direct task of winning the strategic positions in them.

Red Sports Movement

Where there are Red Sports organisations the task of the Young Communists naturally consists in the strengthening in all possible ways of these organisations; but simultaneously the Young Communists must not weaken their attack on the general and proletarian reformist sports organisations. In regard to the Red Sports organisations the fundamental task consists in drawing into them the still unorganised youth and their transformation into organisations which, owing to their activity, the best part of the working youth will prefer to any other sports organisations.

In order to ensure the possibility of successful work on the sports front the Young Communists must by all means encourage the development of class sport within their own ranks, and must watch over the selection of good sportsmen capable of participating in the struggle for leadership in the sports movement, both that having a definitely Marxist political standpoint and in general sports contests.

It is also necessary that the Young Communists and the Communist Parties must resolutely face up to the task of setting up youth clubs, wherever the police conditions permit it, of course, where the working youth can consider various political questions, can carry on work for their self-education, can engage in sport, and also get recreation, such as the theatre, cinema, collective games, dances, and so on. Such youth clubs cannot be established without the assistance of the Party, while on the other hand such clubs will be of enormous assistance to the Party and in particular to the Young Communist organisations in their mass activities among the proletarian youth. On the proposal of the Young Communist International the Organisation Bureau of the Comintern in 1926 took corresponding decisions, but like many other decisions of the Comintern in the realm of activities among the working youth, these decisions are being put into force only very feebly so far.

In conclusion we wish to add a few words on the Young Communist press. One need not stop to argue that the press must play one of the decisive roles in the matter of the general stimulation and consolidation of the work of the Young Communists, or in particular that it must play an organisational role of first rate importance. All this should have been so in the past and should obligatorily become a fact in the very near future. So far the position in regard to the Young Communist press is not at all rosy. The information of the Organisation Bureau of the Young Communist International shows that in the most important capitalist

countries the circulation of Young Communist newspapers hardly exceeds the number of Young Communist members in the particular country concerned. Taking into account the smallness of the numbers in the Young Communist organisations such a circulation must be acknowledged as absolutely unsatisfactory. In Germany the situation is still worse: the circulation of the Young Communist paper is almost five thousand smaller than the number of members in the League; in other words, not even every member of the German Young Communist League is a regular reader of his League organ. The basic causes of such an abnormal situation have to be sought on the one hand (and obviously first and foremost) in the contents of the Young Communist newspapers, which do not satisfy the juvenile workers, and secondly, in the inadequate activity of the members of the League in the work of distribution. All these defects must be eliminated as swiftly as possible, and again in this matter the Party must assist the Young Communists in every possible way.

In indicating practical measures in this direction one must necessarily make use of the experience afforded by the worker-correspondent movement, and also of the experiment of establishing special groups of friends of newspapers, for the purpose of assisting in their distribution. Every member of the Young Communist organisations, and as wide a circle of sympathisers as possible, must be drawn into the work of distributing their press material. (Of course, this does not hold good of countries with an illegal Young Communist movement, where the conditions of distributing their own and the Party press are quite special.)

Factory Newspapers

Also the work on factory Young Communist newspapers must be intensified everywhere at all costs. As the international Party experience shows, factory newspapers are one of the most important means of increasing work in the enterprises and for strengthening the factory nuclei. Meantime factory newspapers have not enjoyed great popularity in the Young Communist movement down to the present. And this is quite unsound, it is a definite, serious hiatus in the organisational work of the Young Communist movement.

The ferocious persecution of Young Communist organisations by the reaction makes the problem of working out methods of underground work, and in this direction of exploiting the already existing international experience, one of the immediate and highly serious issues for the Young Communist movement.

All the above-mentioned defects in the work of the Young Communists are not in the least fresh discoveries. Following Lenin's instructions, the Young Communists will ruthlessly expose all errors committed, and the existing defects in their work. One need have no doubt that, having exposed the defects of their work, the Young Communists will find strength and ability to liquidate all these defects resolutely and in Bolshevik fashion. The Young Communists will justify all the hopes of the older generation of the revolutionary proletariat.

In Memory of the Organiser of the Canton Rising—Comrade Chang Ta Lai

N. Fokin

COMRADE CHANG TA LAI has been killed. Canton, the cradle of the Chinese revolution, has also become the grave of the young revolutionary, Chang.

Comrade Chang Ta Lai was born in 1898 in Changchow, a small county town; his family were small traders who had failed in business. Chang's father died shortly after he was born, and he was left to the sole care of his mother, who dragged out an existence of semi-starvation. His relatives paid for his schooling. He first went to a secondary school, and then to the Peking university in Tientsin, where he studied law. Chang was the ringleader in all agitations and students' movements in his school, which were directed against "the oppressors—the teachers." The punishment meted out for these primitive forms of protest against antiquated school regulations and remnants of old social and family customs did not frighten comrade Chang, but led him on to the greater struggle for social liberty.

In the spring of 1919 the students' agitation took on the form of a national liberation movement, directed first of all against Japanese imperialism, which had taken possession of Shantung, one of the richest provinces in China, and against the Treaty of Versailles, which had sanctioned this seizure. The fourth of May rising in 1919 was organised by the student movement. This revolt was marked by many spectacular effects, such as the demand for the boycott of foreign goods, the resignation of Cabinet ministers, the burning of their houses, suicide as a form of protest, etc., but it did not meet with the support of the masses of the workers and peasants, which might have given this revolt a real revolutionary character. Therefore, the actual results of this movement were negligible. The "fourth of May" camp began to split up. Some of the disillusioned participants threw "politics" overboard, devoted themselves to personal pleasures and became sex-mad. A peculiar type of Artzibashevism became the rage. Artzibashev's sex novel, "Sanine," was translated into Chinese, and became the standard or kind of bible for this type of student. It should be pointed out that the first form which the reaction of the Chinese students adopted was a refusal to participate in any kind of social life and a passion for sex problems. The increase in the literature dealing with sex problems, read mainly by students, was a proof of the desertion of the revolutionary movement by the students. For instance, in that year 57 editions of "Sanine" were published. A mass of periodicals and other literature was published dealing with sex questions, and enjoyed a popularity unheard of in the case of other publications.

Another group of those disillusioned with "the futility of their struggle and the silence of the mass"

threw themselves into academic work, intellectual self-perfection for the preparation of "the new human being" out of oneself. A third type issued the slogan, "To the people!" and devoted themselves to the education and culture of the Chinese people in order to make them capable of accepting "the new ideas." A fourth group began to listen to the rumblings of the fierce class struggle which was spreading throughout Europe and chiefly to China's great neighbour—the Soviet Union.

Influence of Russian Revolution

The October Revolution and the revolutionary outbursts throughout Europe during the period extending from 1917 to 1920 brought this section of the Chinese students under the influence of the ideological banner of the European revolutionary movement. Socialist theory began to secure a widespread following, numerous socialist organisations were formed. Special journals began to be published for the propaganda of socialism and Marxism. The more active elements of the "socialist" section of the students did not confine their work to the mere academic study of socialism, they flung themselves into the work of organising the masses of the peasants and workers to spread their ideas. Chang Ta Lai was one of these students. Together with comrades Li Ta Chao and Chang Go Tao, comrade Chang organised in Peking in 1919 the first group of the Young Socialist League, afterwards reorganised as the Young Communist League, which constituted the basis of the Communist movement in China. Comrade Chang having finished his studies, renounced his private life and legal career, and devoted himself completely to revolutionary Party work. He went to Shanghai, and there organised the first groups of the Communist Party and Young Communists, together with Cheng Tu Siu, the former leader of the Communist Party. Shortly after the First Congress of the Communist Party of China, in the summer of 1920, the Party sent him to Japan to work amongst the revolutionary emigrant workers there.

Comrade Chang Ta Lai was twice in Russia, the first time as delegate of the C.P. at the Third Congress of the Comintern, and the second time when the question of the entry of the Party into the Kuomintang was decided.

In the autumn of 1924, at the Fourth Congress of the Chinese Young Communist League, comrade Chang was elected general secretary of the executive of the Y.C.L.C. Shortly afterwards, in accordance with a decision of the C.P. executive, he was sent to Canton to act there as editor of the legal Communist paper, "The People," which carried on an incessant struggle in its columns against the right-wing and centre of the Kuomintang. He defended, jointly with comrade Cheng

Comrade Chang Ta Lai—continued

En Liang, the theory, which many considered "heresy," that the Kuomintang could not have an independent left wing, and that the policy of the C.P.C. should be directed towards winning over the hegemony within the Kuomintang. It is, therefore, not surprising that comrade Chang was the Communist whom the members of the Kuomintang hated most.

After the Kuomintang army had seized Wuhan he left for Hupei. In May, 1927, comrade Chang was elected a member of the Party, and appointed secretary of the Hupei Provincial Party Committee.

For the Peasants

Although comrade Chang was not free from certain opportunist errors which prevailed in the ranks of the C.P. at that time, still he had a keener feeling than others for the tendencies among the workers and peasants. He took an active part in the struggle against those leaders who agreed with the Kuomintang that the workers and peasants were guilty of excesses, and said that those who joined in the Kuomintang denunciation of the peasants as hooligans, etc., were not Communists but traitors.

The extraordinary conference of the C.P.C. which removed the opportunist leaders elected comrade Chang candidate to the provisional Polit-Bureau of the C.C. of the C.P.C., and he was soon appointed secretary of the Wuhang Dun District Committee.

Comrade Chang went to Canton when the province was in the throes of revolt. The peasants and workers had seized power in a number of districts; a fierce class struggle was in process both in the towns and villages. Now arms and ammunition were the order of the day, the time for flaming oratory had passed. The white terror gave place to the Reds. The struggle in Canton was centred around three military groups, Chang Fat Kwei, Li Fu Ling and Li Ti Sum. One strike after the

other broke out, the workers seized the yellow unions, got rid of the leaders and took control of whole districts.

His Last Work

It was quite clear to Chang that if the town did not take the lead of the civil war in the village, and if the C.P. did not develop the struggle to the highest pitch, that of revolution, then the Wuhan workers and peasants would not have sufficient support. Comrade Chang became the inspirer and organiser of the rising. He was everywhere, in the district committee, the staff headquarters and among the masses. For example, a few days before the rising comrade Chang called a conference, attended by 200 soldier delegates, at the grave of the 72 victims of the first Chinese revolution. His passionate speech induced the delegates to swear on oath to conquer or die in the attempt to establish the Soviet regime. The revolt of the Canton workers took place on the night of December 11th. The town was seized and the Soviet Power was proclaimed. The Canton workers elected Chang Ta Lai member of the Soviet Government, as deputy-president of the People's Commissariat and the People's Commissariat of War.

In those heroic and terrible days comrade Chang was everywhere where a leader or an organiser or a fiery speech was required. When he was making a speech he heard that the twice defeated militarist troops had invaded the town with the assistance of British cruisers. He rushed through the streets to the staff headquarters under a rain of shell, but on the way he fell hit by a volley from the guns of the hirelings.

The revolution was defeated. Comrade Chang Ta Lai and thousands of unknown heroes were the victims, who point the way to the liberation of the Chinese workers and peasants.

All glory to the heroes of Canton. May the memory of the best soldier of the Chinese revolution, comrade Chang Ta Lai, live for all time!



The Economic Struggle and Communist Tasks

Resolution of the Trade Union Commission of the E.C.C.I. on the Fourth Congress of the R.I.L.U.

THE Trade Union Commission of the E.C.C.I. considers it necessary to focus the attention of the Fourth Congress of the Profintern (R.I.L.U.) on the problem of the tactics of the Communist Parties, the revolutionary unions and revolutionary minorities in face of the intensifying economic struggle. The Congress should make an evaluation both of the direct causes and of the character of the new strike wave. The following principles must be taken as the basis of the strike strategy :

1. Under the conditions of the concentration of capital the strike struggle is being transformed more and more into a political struggle, and consequently the task of Communists must be, by way of the mass mobilisation of the working class from the bottom up, gradually to extend the area of the strike struggle, and to ensure that as large a number of the masses as possible shall have a clear perspective of the strike struggle under the conditions of monopolistic capital, in other words, to strive for the gradual direction of the strike on to a higher political plane, even to the point of struggle against capitalist stabilisation and the bourgeois State. But this does not mean that any strike whatever can be converted into a direct struggle for the ultimate aims.
2. The mobilisation of the masses should proceed in the first place, together with concrete demands in the realm of wages and hours, under the slogan of the freedom of the strike struggle, against compulsory arbitration, against social-democratic loyalty to wage agreements being on a short-period basis.
3. In order to ensure a greater mobilisation of the masses than has ever occurred before there must be a more rapid penetration into the large concentrated enterprises. The maximum militant unity of the working class, the organisation of the unorganised, the organisation of the "unskilled" workers, the overcoming of the insignificant extent of organisation in the large enterprises—these must be the tasks of the Communist advance-guard.
4. While displaying the utmost activity as propagandists for action before the strike, the majority of Communists forget that a successful consummation to the strike can only follow if the leadership of the strike is wrested from the hands of the reformists, who inevitably betray it at some stage or other of the strike struggle. The centralisation of the strike struggle under the conditions of election of strike committees, both of separate factory strike committees and of a central strike committee—these must be the Communists' slogans in the sphere of leadership of the strike struggle.
5. In every separate strike the task of the Communist advance-guard consists in their being able to mobilise the wide masses on the basis of the concrete slogans of the given stage. This means that the Communists should strive, not necessarily to surpass the reformists by the extreme nature of their demands, but by their personal readiness for struggle should disclose to the broad working masses the defeatist manoeuvres of the reformist trade union bureaucracy. Every strike must provide an area of struggle for leadership between the Communists and the reformists. Consequently the theory that the task of the Communists is to "thrust" the trade union bureaucracy into the struggle is an injurious and erroneous one. (See "Parteiarbeiter," No. 1, 1928, leading article.) At a certain stage of the struggle, when there is present a favourable attitude towards the strike on the part of the majority of the workers, the Communist Party not only can but *must* organise the strike struggle even against the trade union bureaucracy if they put up opposition, and must take the leadership into their own hands through the instrumentality of the strike committees.
6. To be a good Communist does not in the least mean being always and under whatever conditions in favour of an immediate strike. This has special application to the abuse of the slogan of the General Strike. The Communist should have the ability to select the moment of struggle, and to have a clear estimate of the correlation of forces; he should not be dragged at the tail of the masses, nor should he run too far ahead. He should feel the pulse of the factories and workshops; he should not play at strikes, but once he has begun one he should carry on to the end. Hence it is necessary to have a definition of the nature, dimensions and dynamics of the strike. The more extensive the strike, the larger the number of workers drawn into the struggle, the more the stoppage of work affects the national economy, so much the larger are the chances of victory under a correct leadership.
7. None the less, it would be erroneous to draw from this the conclusion that no partial strike and no guerrilla tactics whatever are allowable. A partial strike can also lead to victory, and consequently should be exploited to the maximum. It can even play a revolutionary role if it breaks the grip of the reformist stranglehold of the mass movement, if it serves as a signal for a tense mood among the masses and as a starting-point for the acceleration of the whole movement. It all depends on the concrete circumstances, a sober estimation of which is the pre-requisite of any manoeuvring whatever in the sphere of the economic struggle. The Communists must struggle resolutely against attempts

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Position and Tasks of the Chinese C.P. after the Canton Rising

John Pepper

THE February Plenum of the E.C.C.I. must pay very special attention to the pressing problems of the Chinese Revolution.

The "national" bourgeoisie was driven into the counter-revolutionary camp through the independent revolutionary action of the working class, the peasant risings, which were continuously on the increase, and which adopted radical slogans, and by the growing pressure of the imperialists. This fact constitutes one of the most fundamental factors in reviewing the entire situation connected with the Chinese revolution. The ex-national bourgeoisie formed a bloc with the imperialists and with the militarists against the workers and peasants. A certain consolidation of the forces of reaction has taken place in China. But this consolidation does not by any means denote the end of the immediate revolutionary situation in China. Neither politically nor economically has any of the tasks of the revolution been decided. The workers and peasants have not been defeated. As Marx already pointed out, the clash of the revolution consolidates the forces of counter-revolution, but only to provide the forces of revolution with the possibility of overthrowing the entire counter-revolution.

Bourgeois Revolution Unfinished

The peculiarity of the present situation in China lies in the fact that the period of bourgeois democratic revolution has by no means ended, but the bourgeois-democratic revolution is already beginning to develop into the proletarian-socialist revolution, and certain traits of the proletarian revolution are already appearing. The tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution have not yet been solved: China is not united. China has not freed herself from the yoke of the imperialists. The destruction of the remnants of feudalism, the solution of the agrarian revolution constitute the basic tasks of the mass struggle. The period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution has by no means ended, the leaders of the revolution are the proletariat, which relies on the peasantry as its ally. The proletariat is fighting to-day for the establishment of the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants in the form of Soviets.

Recently signs have been on the increase which point to a certain change in the policy of the imperialists in China, a new "peaceful" imperialist intervention is being prepared. The previous intervention of the imperialists was carried out at a time when the nationalist armies in their role of revolutionaries occupied Shanghai and Nanking. At that time the intervention was directed against the national bourgeoisie with the workers and peasants as allies. Now a radical change has taken place in the position. And this is one of the most important new features of the Chinese situation. The ex-national bourgeoisie has complied with the two main demands of the imperialists: the overthrow of the

workers and peasants and the breach with the Soviet Union. The Nanking Government of the Kuomintang Party is now nothing but a political compradore of the imperialist Powers. The new "imperialist" intervention is not to take place against the ex-national Chinese bourgeoisie, but in agreement with the Chinese bourgeoisie. This intervention is apparently to be of a "peaceful" nature, the foreign troops are to form the reserve force, the main forces will be the so-called "national" armies of the Nanking Government. The Nanking Government is to receive some sort of recognition so that there should be a government in existence which will recognise the imperialists' pretensions and privileges and their right to exploit.

These regroupings of the class forces and changes in political conditions, which are being enacted on the basis of economic decline, the growing chaos, the interminable militarist wars, and of the increasing impoverishment of the masses of the workers and peasants, constitute the factors which determine the position of the workers and also the relations of the Communist Party to the proletariat.

The young Communist Party, which is to-day the target of the entire forces of reaction, which must carry on its struggle under conditions of the most brutal oppression by the white terror, has undergone a decisive and fundamental change during this period. The August Conference of the Communist Party of China marked a ruthless break with the opportunist errors of the former period, freed the Party from the old opportunist leadership and adopted the definite Bolshevik policy of the armed rising. In the earlier stages of the struggle the Communist Party of China also led a number of heroic struggles, but the Party leadership committed catastrophic opportunist errors. It attempted to subordinate the class struggle of the proletariat to the

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to dam the development of the movement towards partial strikes under the pretext of weakness of the trade union organisation, the danger of repression by the government and so on.

8. In order to lead the masses during the strike it is necessary that there should be energetic work before the strike. The Communists must be always with the masses, and must prove that he is better than the reformists by his unbroken everyday work, and by his intelligent and energetic defence of the interests of the workers. The workers judge the Communists not by their words, but by their deeds; that is why the problem of the everyday, detailed political and organisational work in the enterprises is the preliminary condition, without which the claim to the leadership of the strikes will remain merely a paper one.

Position and Tasks of Chinese C.P.—contd.

national struggle. It saw only the various combinations of generals and politicians above and not the development of the masses struggle below. It neglected the basic task of arming the workers. It recoiled from the great historic task of the development of the people's agrarian revolution. It created a position which ran the risk of transforming the Communist Party into a hanger-on of the Kuomintang. The fact that the Communist Party of China has been able to overcome these opportunist dangers and direct its policy again on to the main path of revolution gives proof of its indomitable vitality.

The Canton Rising

Without this decisive break with opportunism the Nanchang rising and the southern expedition to Swatow would have been impossible. It was the August conference which created the conditions for the December rising in Canton. The rising in Canton does not only give proof of the heroism of the Chinese workers, the splendid militant courage of the Communist Party of China, but constitutes one of the most important events in the Chinese revolution. The setting up of the Soviet Republic in Canton is of historic significance, it is the most glorious deed of the Chinese workers and marks the greatest attainment of the Chinese revolution thus far. The Canton rising was crushed and the bourgeoisie of the whole world maliciously declares that Canton has become the city of the dead. But the bourgeoisie only records the defeats sustained, and cannot understand what an advance from the point of view of principle the establishment of the Soviet Power in one of the most important centres in the Far East signifies. There is a symbolic significance in the fact that Canton, the cradle of the bourgeois revolution, has now also become the cradle of the proletarian revolution in China. The Canton of Sun Yat Sen has now also become the Canton of Lenin. Canton suffered defeat, but the defeat is the source and the guarantee of future victories.

The great gains which the Communist Party of China has to show for the period just elapsed are the August conference, which put an end to opportunism, the southern expedition to Swatow and the Canton revolution.

But it is also necessary to consider those factors which constitute the losses when analysing the position of the workers and the attitude of the advance guard of the proletariat to the working class.

The defeats suffered during the revolution (Shanghai, Wuhan, Swatow, Canton) have resulted in a temporary decline in the workers' activities recently. The economic depression and the increasing ravages of the white terror have weakened the great mass organisations of the workers which had already been formed during an earlier period.

For the most part the trade unions are not in a position to organise the workers in their ranks, they are only organisations in name, and very often nothing more than directing committees. Many of the economic strikes involve but a few workers and are inadequately linked up. The strike movement which the Shanghai workers have been carrying on for the past five months

could not be victorious. The peasant risings, which are on the increase in many districts, for the most part failed to find active support in the Labour movement. The Canton rising did not cause any mass movements amongst the workers in the rest of China. The General Strike slogan of the Communist Party received no support.

The Workers must Not be Split

Everywhere the counter-revolutionary Kuomintang is trying to split the ranks of the workers. It is forming yellow trade unions throughout the country, which are not real workers' organisations, but merely adjuncts of the State machine which constitute a section of the military power. The yellow union of the engineering workers was active as a counter-revolutionary force, both during and after the Canton rising, and even before, and competed with the generals in the slaughter of the workers.

The danger exists that this position of the workers and the Labour movement may cause a division between the active revolutionary minority: the Communist Party and the broad masses of the workers who are at the mercy of the white terror and impeded in their activities.

This danger is heightened by the social composition of the Communist Party. Its leading cadres still consist to a larger extent than is desirable of students and intellectuals with far too few workers and peasants.

During the period of the political strikes, mass meetings and mass demonstrations it was possible for the intellectual elements in the Party to play a very great role. But now, however, when the workers are not in the street, but in the factories or have returned as unemployed to the villages, at a time when the leadership of economic struggles plays a very great role, certain sections of this intellectual circle are not able to fit into this new method of struggle, and under-estimate the efficiency of mass agitation and mass propaganda as a means of struggle.

This incorrect standpoint is by no means shared by the entire Party, and must not be exaggerated under any circumstances, but yet it has caused several mistakes to be made in the various organisations of the Communist Party. The most important of these errors are:

1. Neglect of work in the trade unions and the neglect of the struggle for the daily demands of the workers.

2. A too close connection between the trade unions and the Communist Party. The correct policy which provides for the political guidance of the trade unions through the Communist Party has been over-reached in practice until the connection between the Party and the trade unions has become too close, the trade union committee has become identical with the Party committee and the trade unions are frequently simply sections of the Party instead of embracing a much wider section of the working masses.

3. Strikes are often declared regardless of the economic position in the industries involved and without considering the existing strength of the workers, and even when there is no possibility whatever of success.

4. Strikes are declared without consulting the wor-

Position and Tasks of Chinese C.P.—contd.

kers concerned, and often against the wishes of these workers.

5. Strikes are begun under Communist leadership without any attempt being made to negotiate with the capitalists, thereby giving the yellow unions the opportunity of seizing the leadership and carrying on negotiations with the employers on behalf of the workers.

Terror is often used against the yellow unions, but there is no propaganda carried on to expose these leaders. No attempt is made by means of propaganda and agitation to enlighten the workers as to the treacherous activity of these leaders.

Neglect of Propaganda

The tendencies which are described here are noticeable on various occasions in the different Party organisations, and must be attributed to the neglect of mass agitation and mass propagnada in the task of leading the workers. They must be carefully exposed and overcome, for they serve to undermine the confidence of the masses in the revolutionary trade unions and the Communist Party, and allow the yellow unions to get the control of all industrial struggles and thus isolate the revolutionary advance guard from the masses of the workers.

Besides this under-estimation of mass agitation and mass propagnada in the leadership of the workers there is also in certain Party circles an inadequate understanding for the conditions of the armed rising as a means of class struggle in certain circumstances. This point of view is demonstrated first of all in the opinion that armed risings can and must be engineered all the time and everywhere irrespective of the actual conditions. There is an idea that the armed rising must be "hurried up" otherwise the workers' and peasants' revolution might come too late as a result of the economic decline of the country, the increase in the number of factories being closed down and the decimation of the ranks of the workers. The November theses of the Plenum of the Communist Party of China also dealt with this tendency.

The important problems of the correct selection of the moment for the rising, the certainty of the most extensive mass participation and of the most careful general political, organisational and military preparation for the rising must also be raised and discussed in connection with Canton. One of the most important duties of the February Plenum of the E.C.C.I. will be to examine those mistakes which were made on these lines in connection with Canton rising. The lessons of the Canton rising for the Chinese workers should not only consist in recording its great historic significance, but also in determining those lessons which will ensure that the next time there will be a greater participation of the masses and that the moment chosen for the rising may be more favourable.

These incorrect tendencies which prevail amongst a large section of the Chinese Party must be analysed and overcome. The recognition of these tendencies does not imply that at the present moment no opportunist dangers exist in the Chinese Party. The basis of opportunism

was the failure of the Party to adapt itself to the new conditions of struggle which were created through the agrarian revolution. The basis of the aforementioned tendencies consists in the failure of certain Party circles to adapt themselves to the new conditions of struggle, which have arisen out of the present new grouping of classes. The opportunist danger has not yet been completely overcome, it can come to life again in the form of a liquidatory tendency after the defeat. There are still many opportunist mistakes made in the everyday work of the Party local organisations. This opportunism must be fought mercilessly whenever it manifests itself. The Communist Party of China will only become the leader of victorious risings of workers and peasants if it overcomes these dangers.

Future Tasks

The present position of the Chinese revolution and the actual attitude of the Communist Party of China to the workers also determine the tasks of our Party. These tasks for the immediate future consist in :

(1) Determined policy for revolution. The political slogan to be Soviets.

(2) No playing with revolution. Concrete analysis of every situation in order to be able to determine the conditions which really ensure victorious risings. Careful political, organisational and military preparation for risings. Careful choice of the moment for the rising. The absolute certainty of the largest possible mass participation in the rising.

(3) The slogan must be, Nearer to the masses. Only with the help of the masses can successful revolutions be made. There must be a general application of the methods of mass persuasion, mass agitation and mass propaganda.

(4) The path of victory in China will lead to a number of armed risings in separate provinces, which, however, does not mean that in the accomplishment of a rising in any one province the joint assistance of the workers and peasants in other parts should be left out of account.

(5) Organisation of the trade unions, which should be organisationally separate from the Party organisations and based on the masses. Intensive work to win over the workers organised in the yellow trade unions.

(6) Much more intensive contact and co-ordination between the workers' and the peasant risings. Organisation of peasant societies. Determined policy for the people's agrarian revolution.

(7) Work in the army. The Communist policy of the disintegration of the bourgeois armies must become a part of the daily work of the Party.

(8) Development of the Party; closer contact between the Party and the masses, greater contact between the officials and the Party membership, more democracy within the Party, a change in the social composition of the Party by increasing the proletarian elements.

Nearer to the masses, the daily work of preparing the masses for a victorious revolution, such are the tasks of the hour for the Communist Party of China.